A Basket of Fruits

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Summary: A psychotic serial killer manages to escape from an insane asylum, only to get injured in the process and loose his memories. Given a new beginning and identity, the blue-haired amnesic discovers the light and darkness of society while being oblivious to his violent past. AU. Rated T for themes and violence in future chapters. *IN EDITING PROCESS!

Chapter 1: Chapter 1

Society is like a basket of fruits. There could be hundreds of kinds of fruits, such as bananas, pineapples, and grapes. Although each of them seems exactly the same, in many ways, they are different from each other. For example, a banana can be yellow or green. Grapes range from different sizes. An apple can either taste sour or sweet.

Society enjoys picking the most perfect fruits. From the eyes of society, your flavor did not matter. What matter the most is your physical appearance. A perfect fruit does not have bruises and is in perfect shape.

Sadly, not all fruits are perfect. Some of them are deformed and twisted in unusual shapes. Their surface is coated with many bruises. Society is a bit careful when it comes to picking these fruits. If it was kind and brave enough, society will choose the deformed ones. However, for the bruised fruits, society would simply leave them in the basket. As time passes, these fruits slowly rot away.

Though, some rotting fruits were not bruised to begin with. They were picked as perfect fruits with a potential to be delicious. However, some were picked by the wrong hand. The hand could put it in rotten situations, such as dropping it too many times, leaving it outside for too long, or giving it to an authoritative mouth, which disapproved the fruit's taste. Like the bruised fruits, they were thrown away in the trash without a bat of an eye.

In the middle of a bay was an insane asylum. It was society's trash can. People who were considered to be mentally unstable were tossed into this horrendous building, never to see the light of society again. It was literally a place for an unstable person to live out his or her life until he or she finally stops breathing.

Now, you might ask, why didn't these people get any treatment? These people were moldy, rotting, bruised fruits. They could never go back to what they were, no matter how hard they wished and tried. Being picky and cautious, society viewed these people as a threat. Whenever one person began to show signs of rotting, he or she was immediately thrown into the asylum, never to be seen again.

The insane asylum was a terrible place. Each locked, barred cell held a crazed person. He or she would violently grab a hold on the bars and rattle and bang on it, screaming hysterically. Some would just lie at the corner and miserably look out the barred windows, wishing for the freedom they once had. Others would just look at the walls and strangely picture something. Boredom was one of the many obstacles they had to overcome.

All of them were desperate for something to happen. The only thing they could do was use their imagination. They dreamt fleeing the insane asylum and returning to their families and friends, even if it cost their lives. Yet, they know it was simply a dream that would never happen. The lid was sealed shut with super glue. Due to this, they made no attempt to break out of their cages.

Except for one.

Sealed away in a lonely jail cell, was a psychopath known as the Masked Slasher, who was considered to be so mentally unstable, he was constantly in a straitjacket, which was attached to a cold, iron chair. His cramped, square cell was padded with white, not allowing a single sound to enter the room. The sunlight that lit his dull, lonely

His past was a very violent one indeed. Starting from a young age, he viciously murdered several people, which caused panic throughout the nation. Luckily, the police managed to capture him and send him to the asylum. Not wanting to shock the public, the Masked Slasher's identity was never shown to the public.

To the Masked Slasher, every day was like a dream. He would awake from his pitch-black dream and have workers from the asylum hand-feed him. After that, he went back to sleep again. The next time he awoke, he would be led to the bathroom, where he cleansed himself. Then, he was led back to his cell again and fell into a deep, dark sleep.

Unlike most of the mentally unstable held in the asylum, the Masked Slasher believed that it was possible to break out of the asylum, even though he failed several times. Day by day, he waited for the perfect moment, when all of the workers either left or were extremely exhausted.

And that day finally came...

The Masked Slasher awoken from his dream when a worker unlocked the door to his empty cell. While two other workers were freeing him from his straight jacket, in front of him were two guards armed with rifles and guns. The Masked Slasher stayed still and looked ahead. It was time for him to bathe.

As he was led down the hallways, the Masked Slasher could only look ahead. Even if he turned his head around and looked at one of the guards, they would take see as a chance to attack and escape. Breathing quietly, the Masked Slasher blinked and glanced down the hallway, waiting patiently for the perfect time to flee.

Finally, the Masked Slasher arrived in the bathroom. While the guards stood near the exit, patrolling the area, the Masked Slasher stripped away of his fluorescent blue clothing— indications that he was from the insane asylum, and turned on the shower. The sound of water trickling onto the hard ground was an indication that all was fine to the guards.

Or was it?

Noticing that the security's guards were down, the Masked Slasher quietly went to the pile of his discarded clothes and took out a knife. It was an average cooking knife. One could assume that he managed to take it from the kitchen during one of his failed escapes and hid it for gods-know-how-long.

His breathing as silent as the air, the Masked Slasher carefully snuck towards the guards. The only noise he could hear was the running shower behind him and his own heartbeat pumping adrenaline through his prepared body.

Water rolled down his bare body as the Masked Slasher approached one of the guards, who was not paying attention. Leading an infamous serial killer around the asylum was a dull job. To him, nothing tragic could happen to him with a hundred eyes watching the most notorious insane.

Unfortunately, the eyes blinked, missing the brutal event that occurred in seconds. Without warning, the Masked Slasher suddenly grabbed the first guard by the throat. His croaked, strangled cry was a flashing red alarm for his partner, who immediately turned around and backed away in reflex. His shaking hands hastily loaded his pistol and pointed the deadly weapon at the Masked Slasher, who coolly looked back. It was abnormal. A human's natural response to a weapon aimed at them was to flee the treacherous scene.

"Shoot! Shoot!" the first guard begged his partner desperately. "Stop him!"

"Urrrk!" A choked shout echoed down the hallway. A patrolman who was guarding the entrance heard the lifeless choke. His heart beating frantically, he hurriedly took his radio, trying to ignore the alarming, shrill beep screaming at him to run for his life.

"There's something wrong. Check the showers!"

Looking at his victim's bloody body, the Masked Slasher tossed the lifeless corpse onto the ground in front of his startled, petrified partner. Huffing hysterically, the paralyzed partner could only helplessly watch the bloodthirsty killer tauntingly drop his knife onto the blood-strained ground and pick up his departed companion's gun. What should he do?! Should he run and get backup? He might live, but the Masked Slasher might run! Maybe he should shoot the killer instead... Though, the head of the facility might not approve it.

"Die now." A thundering bang boomed down the hallways as the second watchman tumbled onto the ground, sputtering his last breath. Coldly looking at his deceased preys, the Masked Slasher noticed a small card sitting in one of their pockets. Thinking that he had found the key that was searched desperately for years, he went to the still body, picked the card up, and looked at it.

A flock of hurrying footsteps was what broke his attention like glass. Looking behind him for a few quick moments, the Masked Slasher hastily turned and ran down a hallway. At the end of that dark hallway was a locked door with a sigh that read "EXIT" above it. Using the card on the door's secure card look, he hurried into the cold April night. Alarms began to blare stridently, alerting that someone was escaping.

Where should he go? It would be a matter of time before the guards had him surrounded. The Masked Slasher noticed a bridge that led from the asylum to the mainland. Maybe he could hurry down the bridge to the mainland, where he could finally vanish from the asylum! Not wasting a moment, the Masked Slasher hurried down the bridge.

At that moment, two guards in a truck armed with a rifle hurriedly drove down the bridge. "Do you see him?" the guard with the rifle asked, peering around his calm yet treacherous surroundings. The looming, silver moon, which was slowly being covered by clouds, provided little relief for him.

"No, I don't!" the driver answered.

"We can't let him get to the mainland!" the guard responded sternly. "If he does, innocent blood will be shed!"

"BANG!" A swift, rapid bullet suddenly flew through the glass windows, causing the driver to swivel the speeding truck. "Oh shit!"

Standing in front of the truck was the Masked Slasher himself. He was boldly pointing the gun at the truck's tire.

"Stop!" the guard exclaimed, clutching his rifle tightly. "He's right there!"

The first guard immediately stepped on the breaks. However, because the truck was going so fast, it ended sliding across the bridge. The truck struck the Masked Slasher and the side of the bridge at the same time. The two guards heard a cry, the sound of metal breaking, and a splash. Panicked, the two quickly got out of the vehicle and looked down from the bridge. Bubbles of all sizes rushed towards the surface of the bay and popped.

"Do you think he—?" the guard began to ask.

"Yes." the first guard cut off, answering his partner's question. "He died in the impact."

Author's Notes: ...Cliffhanger? *gets hit in face with book*

Well, here's the beginning of the story I announced after finishing "The Surface's Shadow"! This fanfic was hanging around in my mind and as soon as I finished TSS, I had to upload the first chapter as soon as possible. The simile about society and fruits doesn't belong to me. I stole- I mean borrowed it from one of my teachers.

Just a heads up that this story is not going to carefree and happy like my other ones. In a nutshell, it's a serious, depressed version of "More Than It Meets the Eyes". There are triggering moments and violent deaths later in the story, so be careful!

Story Questions:

Society is like a...?

Do you think the Masked Slasher died in the impact? (So creative...)

(Spoiler question): Who do you think is the Masked Slasher?

Chapter 2: Chapter 2

"...It's so cold..."

A pair of flickering, fearful eyes dimly gazed up at the sky.

"Where am I?"

The same eyes looked around his sandy surroundings.

I'm scared..."

The eyes twitched as black dots began to cloud their vision.

"Everything's becoming so dark..."

As he walked around the wharf and snapped a few pictures with his camera, Eliwood Pherae grasped his dark blue overcoat tightly as the cold wind blew against him. A few palm trees swayed in the wind. The sound of a bronze bell was heard in the distance. His matching blue hat, which was loosely sitting on his head, flopped in the wind, threatening to fly away from its owner. Shivering, Eliwood immediately grasped his hat.

Although it seemed to be a simple job, working as a journalist was a tough job. It tested your patience, as you needed to capture the perfect moment. Also, there was the weather's mood swings. They were never perfect and the same.

Eliwood quickly checked the pictures he took on his camera. With a small, satisfied smile, he decided that they were well enough to use in a magazine page.

Raindrops began to plunge from the evening sky. Gradually gaining speed, as they clattered on the sidewalk, Eliwood shivered as he hurried back to his car. The air slowly became chilly as droplets of water soaked the area.

When Eliwood finally reached his car, he sighed in relief as he opened its trunk. Carefully setting his camera in it, he slammed the trunk shut and was about to get into his car and drive back to his dry, warm home...

...When a powerful gust of wind pulled his hat off his head and naughtily tossed it away. Like a freed bird, the hat flew off towards the beach, into the shadowy distance.

With an annoyed, frustrated sigh, Eliwood opened the trunk again, took out a long flashlight, and slammed the trunk with a groan. His grouchy, navy blue eyes narrowed into a cross glare. Great. He was done with his tiring work. Yet, just as when he was about to go home, the howling wind forced him into a game of fetch. Eliwood hurried into the beach and grumbled to himself, as his rushing steps were slowed by the sea of sand. He just wanted to go home.

After a few moments of impatiently trudging through the dense sand, Eliwood was more than eager to go home. The chilly wind nipped his exposed ear, face, and hands, making them feel as raw as meat. He felt icy blisters tightening on his skin. Reaching where the ocean water tumbled onto the sandy earth, Eliwood was about to leave and depart to his warm home...

When his eyes barely caught a figure lying motionlessly on the ground. It was a dim shape a few feet away from him.

Eliwood's brain told him to leave, as it was awfully cold. However, his heart began to beat violently in nervousness. It told him that there was something wrong. Listening to his heart, not to his logical brain, hurried towards the mysterious object.

From a distance, the object seemed to be a lumber of wood that spent countless days drifting around the ocean with no destination. However, as Eliwood got closer to the object, it began to have an appearance of an animal of some sort. Maybe it was a carcass that washed up? Curious, Eliwood shone his flashlight onto the object and gasped in shock and fright at the sight.

"What... What is this?" Eliwood asked himself softly as his hands shook.

Lying on the gritty, wet sand was a teenage boy near the age of eighteen. The first thing that Eliwood noticed about him was he was stark naked; exposed. His pale chest shakily rose and fell as he desperately gasped for precious air. His entire body shivered violently as rain poured onto his body. His lips and fingernails were slowly turning into a painful blue. Through his azure hair that covered his cerulean-blue eyes, Eliwood could see fright and confusion flicking in his eyes as he drifted in and out of consciousness.

Knowing that the teen's life was on the line, Eliwood quickly dropped his flashlight, took out his phone, and dialed 911. He immediately forgot about his desire for going home. Saving the teen's life was his top priority.

"Hello?" he nervously began. He paced around the by uneasily. "Yes? T-There's an injured teenage boy lying on the shores of Smashburg Beach. Do I know him? I don't. I just found him! Injuries? He's injured on the right arm and I think there is internal bleeding. Is he unconscious? Well, he seems to be awake, but I think he might faint at any moment! Oh? The ambulance will be here as soon as possible? Ok, thank you! P-Please hurry!"

As soon as his call ended, Eliwood turned his attention to the helpless boy. After setting his umbrella over the boy's head, he took over his dark blue overcoat and carefully set it over the dying, younger male, shielding him from the cold. With a soft, weak whimper, the boy timidly looked up at Eliwood. Who was this man?

"Don't worry, help is on the way!" Eliwood told the boy, trying to reassure him. He kneeled down next to him and set a gentle hand on the boy's soaked, azure hair. "Stay with me! Please!"

Trying to keep his eyes open, the boy looked into Eliwood's navy blue eyes and tried to stay awake. With a feeble grunt, he tried to take one of Eliwood's hands for comfort. As he reached for the older man's right hand, a slash of pain sliced through his arm, causing him to cry out. Eliwood caught the message and took the boy's left hand into his right hand. The younger male tightly clutched the elder's hand, desperate to hold on.

A high-pitched, wailing siren caught the two male's attentions. With a quiet "Hmmm?", the blue-haired boy looked around and spotted an ambulance park near the beach.

"Where are they?!" a voice shouted nervously.

The boy watched men hurry out of the ambulance. Two of them went to the back and carried out a stretcher.

A man pointed to the boy and Eliwood. "There they are! Let's hurry!"

Two men hurried towards Eliwood and the nameless boy. Behind them were two other men carrying the stretcher. As soon as the got there, one of the men tightly wrapped bandages over the boy's wounds. The other man slipped a breathing mask over the boy's face.

"He's going to be ok, right?" Eliwood uneasily asked.

"I am not sure." one of the men answered. "It looks like he has hypothermia. If we don't reach the hospital in time, he will die."

"Do you want me to come?" Eliwood asked.

"Just drive to the hospital and tell us what happened." the man replied, before turning his attention to the boy, who suddenly fainted with a weak groan. "No, he lost his consciousness! We need to get him to the hospital quickly!"

With a stern nod, the men quickly lifted the boy onto the stretcher and carried him into the ambulance. Unable to do anything to help, Eliwood watched the men enter the ambulance and drive away.

As Eliwood ran towards his car and got in, he sent a quick text message to his son Roy before driving to the hospital.

"Roy, ill be a little late. Cya." his text message said.

"Ok." Roy's reply said.

Eliwood quickly drove out of the wharf to the hospital without wasting a single minute.

"The young man is currently in surgery. Please wait in the lobby."

His feet edgily tapping the ground, Eliwood sighed as his heavy, tired eyes looked at the clock. His head repeated the doctor's words over and over again like an annoying, broken record. It had been hours since he arrived at the hospital. Not being an experienced doctor or physician, he expected the boy to have just a few broken bones. However, he was shocked when the doctor told him the boy was suffering from not only shattered bones, but internal bleeding, which needed surgical stitching to stop the bleeding.

Eliwood sighed. "Eliwood Pherae, why are you doing this?" he faintly muttered to himself.

The redhead did not understand why he cared about the bluenet so much. He was just an unfortunate, injured teen he

discovered alone on the beach completely naked. Something told him that he was just an irresponsible, foolish teenager who got caught up in his reckless horseplay. Eliwood looked over and gazed at the hospital's entrance. Once when the boy woke up from his surgery, he would just tell the doctors who were his parents, so they could take responsibility for his rash actions. He would not acknowledge the stranger who saved him from a possible untimely demise. If he was that impatient, Eliwood Pherae would just march out of the hospital immediately. Why did this boy matter so much about him? He did not even know him!

But, there was something suspicious about the bluenet. From assumptions, Eliwood anticipated that reckless behavior was what not contributed to the boy's life-threatening injuries. Yes, he could have been beaten by a ruthless gang in the middle of the night. But, something did not fit in the lines. He must've been trodden viciously in order to gain such terrible injuries. Internal bleeding that required surgery? A vehicle might be involved in the bluenet's plight. As he continuously thought of the boy's dreadful injuries, Eliwood stayed glue to his seat. No! He could not walk out of the hospital without knowing whether the boy would live or not!

"You are Eliwood Pherae, right?" A different doctor approached the thinking redhead.

Eliwood jumped slightly. "Er, y-yes!" he replied, caught off guard. "How is he?"

"The boy you found? He got out of surgery a few moments ago. Don't worry, all is well. He will recover from his injuries." The doctor reassured calmly.

"May I see him?" Eliwood requested.

"You may." The doctor responded as he began to lead the redhead into the hospital.

A dark, soundless room. That was where the bluenet was locked in. He could only helplessly lie on his back, waiting for someone or something to free him from the darkness. Strangely, he wanted to stay, as his surroundings felt warm, soft, and comfortable.

The silence was shattered by the sound of footsteps and voices speaking. With a soft whimper, the boy painstakingly opened his eyes, shutting away the darkness. A bit dizzy, he looked around his surroundings.

He was lying in a bed in a hospital. As he moved groggily in his bed, he realized that he was dressed in a fresh, white, warm hospital gown. On the right side of the bed, was a heart monitor that beeped nosily. A glowing green line waved quickly on the screen. Across his bed was a large window. Its curtains were open; through there was nothing much for the boy to observe. He could only see smoky, gray puffs in a pitch-black sky. What were they...? Clouds?

A sudden sting in his head made the bluenet bit his lips and moan weakly in discomfort. What happened? The boy sorely closed his eyes and tried to remember the events that occurred before he woke in this cryptic yet comforting room. Let's see... He was lying on an earth of sand... It was nighttime and freezing cold... How did he get there in the first place?

"I have no idea what happened to him." the boy heard Eliwood as he and a doctor entered the room and jumped. "I just saw him lying on the shores, wounded and wearing nothing!"

"I see..." the doctor answered.

"Do you think he was kidnapped, stripped away of his clothing, beaten, and left on the beach to die?" Eliwood asked. "Was he involved in some act of violence?"

The doctor was about to answer when he noticed that the boy was awake. "He's awake! Let's ask him!"

The blue-haired boy could only watch Eliwood and the doctor approach him. With a fearful whimper, he burrowed unsteadily into the thick, protective covers. Although he had never seen those two men before, his sixth sense told him that there was something to fear about them. He was not supposed to be here! He was not allowed out of those boundaries!

"Oh!" Eliwood exclaimed in surprise. For someone who just came out of surgery, he did have a bit of energy! Why was he so terrified? Did he and the doctor resemble the shady strangers who attacked him? Trying not to scare the cowering male, Eliwood slowly approached the boy's bedside. "Sh, it's ok. Don't be scared, we won't hurt you!"

A small sniffle replied to Eliwood's caring words. Gathering his tiny courage, the boy cautiously pushed the heavy covers off his face and timidly looked at Eliwood and the doctor.

"See, he's fine." The doctor remarked thankfully. "It is likely that he'll make a full recovery."

The boy warily looked around again before asking, "Wha...W-W-Where... Ah... A-Am... I?" His thoughts were still cloudy.

"You're in the Smashburg hospital." the doctor answered, trying to calm his patient. "Eliwood here found you wounded on the beach."

Eliwood smiled gently at the bluenet.

"I... Wer... re... remember you..." the boy said to Eliwood weakly with a sleepy smile. "Da... Tha... Thank you..."

"Now, can you tell us what happened before Eliwood found you?" the doctor requested.

The boy blinked. His mind was a sheet of blank paper. "Ah, I... I ka—can't remember... All I k-k-know is... I... Wha... Was lying o-o-on da— the beach... alone and f-freezing k-k-c-cold..."

"Oh, this can't be good..." the doctor murmured. "Can you tell us your name?"

"My n-name...?" the boy responded dizzily. "I think it's... M-Ma... Mar... M-Mard...? ...Can't remember..."

"Wait..." Eliwood thought, making eye contact with the anemic boy. *"Mar?"*

Ma... Mar... Mard... Marth.

"Does the name 'Marth' ring a bell?" Eliwood suddenly asked.

"M...Marth?" the boy replied, a bit confused. "Well... I-It kinda... Sh-sounds w-wr-right..."

"Then your name is Marth!" Eliwood declared.

"Marth, do you know any relatives who live around here, or do you not remember?" the doctor asked in concern.

"I... I..." Marth shakily started. "I'm sowwy— No! I'm sorry... I can't... Rer-remember..."

"I understand. Thank you for answering." the doctor turned to Eliwood. "Eliwood, may I talk to you in private?"

Eliwood nodded yes, and the two men exited Marth's room, leaving him alone.

"Eliwood, I'm worried." the doctor said.

"Is it because Marth's anemic?" Eliwood guessed.

"Yes." the doctor answered. "We don't know any of his relatives, so we don't know who's going to take him when he fully recovers. We can't keep him in the hospital forever!"

"Don't worry, I'll take him into custody when he fully recovers." Eliwood calmly reassumed.

"Are you sure?" the doctor carefully asked.

Eliwood nodded. "Yes. I am sure." He took a look at Marth, whose eyes flickered as he sleepily shut his eyes and drifted to sleep.

"So, are you saying that the Masked Slasher died in his attempted escape?" an elderly man asked, his back facing towards his guards.

The first guard swallowed nervously. His boss's office was not one of the warmest environments he had been to. Though it was neat, professional, and orderly, its single inhabitant was the air freshener that gave off a scentless odor of fear, causing visitors to feel a sense of nervousness.

"Y-Yes." He answered, trying to look calm. "He was driven off the bridge. Our men are currently scouting the beaches near the bay. So far, they had not found a body. We can only assume that his body washed out of the bay or underwater."

Left alone, Eliwood watched Marth rest peacefully in his room. The younger male's eyes were shut. His soft breathing was rhythmic with his slow rising and falling chest.

Just as when Eliwood turned and was about to leave, he noticed a slight change in Marth's breathing. He turned around and saw Marth frantically breathing, like if something terrifying was chasing him. His face was scrunched in discomfort

and fear. Without thinking about it, Eliwood reached out and was about to pet the frightened youth's head when he immediately stopped. Why was he doing this? Marth was not his son!

The head of the facility sighed in frustration and set a palm on his head in displeasure. "It might be for the best, despite the cut in our payments. Besides, if the Masked Slasher managed to survive..."

Eliwood's paternal instincts mentally defeated his reason and logic. Finally giving in, he began to gently stroke Marth's straight, azure hair, which was a dark, midnight blue in the dark. Like a child, Marth slowly ceased his breathing as he calmed down. He shifted a bit in his bed before smiling softly in his sleep.

"So innocent..." Eliwood thought to himself. "Why would anyone hurt him?"

"...His life will spell many innocent lives lost." The man finally finished.

Author's Notes: Here's the second chapters. Well, things are starting to get interesting, unless you don't like the story for some reason!

Story Question: What do you think happened to Marth?

Chapter 3: Chapter 3

When Marth woke the next morning, he was greeted by a stuffy, runny nose, headache, and a coughing fit. Wheezing coughing and sniffing loudly, Marth dizzily sat up in his bed, careful to not move his injured, bandaged arm.

He looked out the window and watched the gloomy scene embrace the city. The gloomy, depressed clouds covered the sky, giving the landscape a grumpy, nappy atmosphere. Cars of all color, styles, and sizes drove down the soaked streets. The rain plucked and clicked on the roof and ground.

Marth looked at the doorway and watched several nurses and doctors hurry by, ignoring him completely. He suddenly felt lonely. Hey, he was exactly like the other patients in this hospital; sick and injured! Why did they ignore him?

Bored with nothing to do, Marth carefully got out of his bed and unsteadily took a small chair, which sat next to his bed. His head slightly spinning dizzily, Marth set the chair, so it faced out the window, and sat down. He opened the window, thus letting the icy, freezing air rush into the room. Shivering, Marth dazedly watched the rain patter on the soaked ground and drip off the neighboring roofs.

"Mama mia!" a voice suddenly cried out in shock. Marth turned around and saw a short, brunette Italian doctor in a white, clean coat looking at him in bewilderment. Next to him was a blonde woman with baby-blue eyes, garbed in a pink uniform.

"What are you-a doing out of bed?!" Mario asked in panic. He hurried towards the window and quickly closed it. "You need to-a get some rest!"

"W-Well, I was... ch-j-just—" Marth began shakily. He was interrupted by his loud, abrupt sneeze.

"Oh my!" Peach gasped. She carefully helped Marth out of his seat and guided him back to his bed. "You shouldn't be exposed to the cold!"

After when he got into his bed, Marth looked at the two strangers with large, curious, blue eyes. "Wh-Who are you guys?" He sniffed as he felt snot run down his nose.

"I'm-a Dr. Mario." Mario answered. "This is my-a assistant Peach. We are going to be-a your caretakers."

"O...O-Ok..." Marth softly replied.

"Let me take your temperature." Mario said as he stuck a thermometer in Marth's mouth. "...It's above normal. Now, say 'Ah'."

"A-Ahhh...!" Marth loudly said, before erupting into a coughing fit.

"You're-a ill." Mario stated.

"You mean s-sick?!" Marth gasped in panic. "Am... A-Am I g-going to die?! I f-f-feel horrible!"

Mario quietly chuckled at the bluenette's reaction. "Don't-a worry. It's-a just the common cold. With lots-a rest, you'll be-a better in no-a time!"

"So... C-Can I g-g-go to sleep n-na-now?" Marth asked, gently setting his head on the pillow.

"Wait, you need-a to take this." Mario took a bottle of medicine out of his pocket and poured it in its cap. "Drink-a this. It might taste-a funny, but it helps you get-a better!"

Marth took the cap and drank the bitter, strange, thick medicine. As its unusual flavor rolled in his tongue, Marth quickly covered his mouth so he wouldn't spit it out.

"S-Sowwy." Marth apologized as he heistantly swallowed the liquid. "It tastes weally funny."

"We understand." Mario smiled at the bluenette. "Take care and get some rest. We'll be off."

As Mario and Peach were about to exit the room, Marth suddenly called, "Wait, what a-are you g-going to d-do?!"

"We are going to see the other patients." Peach answered. "Don't worry, we aren't going to abandon you. We will see you again."

Watching the two doctors exit his room, Marth sighed quietly and looked out the window again. Although it slowly began to stop raining, the dark clouds were still intact.

Marth looked out the doorway and smiled slightly as he pulled the covers over his body and shut his eyes. He didn't feel as lonely as before.

Meanwhile, a fifteen-year-old, cardinal-haired teen sat lonelily at an empty table, which was in a shady corner of the cafeteria. He groaned quietly to himself as his stomach growled and rumbled desperately for food. Swallowing his spit, Roy watched cliques of noisy students laugh and chat happily with their peers, while eating their delicious food.

Unlike Roy, the other students were not glowing red targets of a tall, large, indigo-haired bully named Ike, who always threatened him for his lunch money.

"Hey Lilina, let's sit over here!" a lime-haired teen near Roy's age said to a girl with blue hair and matching eyes.

Roy could only watch Lilina and Wolt sit at a table close to him, their backs carelessly turned towards him. As they gently cuddled each other, pinched each other's cheeks, and laughed quietly, Roy felt fury building in his angry heart.

For a long time, Roy was friends with Wolt and Lilina, until the two abruptly took their relationship to the next level and officially became a couple. No, Roy was not overreacting. He once caught them smooching romantically (disgustingly in terms of Roy!) at the front of the school.

Strangely, their attitudes towards them greatly changed. The sweet little cherries in their hearts rotted and decomposed as their relationship dragged on, like time itself. Recently, Roy was slapped in the face by Lilina, just for being too loud during art class. When he tried to fight back, Wolt bravely stepped forward and yelled at him, thus defending his special, beloved, little snowflake and humiliating him in front of his peers. Roy didn't know what it was. Maybe it was an act of the alpha male's dominance?

Yes, Roy did try to tell the lovesick duo that they were greatly him quite badly. However, his efforts were just as useful as talking to a brick wall. The two promised to pay him attention, yet they instantly broke their promise in a split second. The only time they noticed him was when their significant other was missing due to school activities or sickness. Being used like a toy was the worst feeling in the world.

Roy looked at the empty seat in front of him and sighed. Usually, Pit, his only friend, would sit with him and happily talk to him, thus making his dark day brighter. However, Pit was sick at home with the flu, leaving Roy alone in the dark with no one to help him.

Near the end of eighth period, Roy was sitting in his seat, looking at the wall clock with a bored gaze in his eyes. He listened to loud music on his phone as the rest of his classmates talked uproariously to each other.

Roy was a bit troubled and stressed. The grade he got on his recent History test was a D, thus dropping his grade to a C. What could he do to save his grade? His father was a strict parent. He pressured him to get only Bs and As on his classes. Also, he learned that two classes he chose for next year were on the same period, tearing him apart into pieces. Which one should he take? Roy sighed in frustration at his thoughts.

All of a sudden, Roy's phone chimed, indicating that he received a text message. Roy quickly checked the message and shook his head. It was from his dad. Even though he got nearly a hundred numbers on his phone, his dad was the only person who messages him.

"Roy, I'll pick you up at the front of the school today." Eliwood's message read.

Roy just continued to listen to his music. Well, at least he didn't have to walk home in the rain today...

When the bell finally rang, students hurriedly rushed out of their classes. As they stuffed their books into their lockers and chatted with their friends, Roy just walked around the growing cliques and went to the front of the school.

There, sitting in a navy blue car, was Eliwood, who was patiently waiting for him. Roy forced a smile as he put his backpack in the trunk and went into the car.

"Hey Dad." Roy greeted as he buckled his seatbelt. "Were you let out of work early?"

Eliwood smiled back. "Yes, I was."

As they drove away from the school, Eliwood said, "Oh Roy, I forgot to ask you something last night."

"What is it?" Roy asked.

"Do you mind...? Hmmm, how should I say this...? Having an adopted brother?" Eliwood asked awkwardly.

Roy jumped in his seat. "What do you mean? What happened?"

"Last night, I found an injured boy close to your age lying on the beach." Eliwood explained. "When I met him in the hospital, I learned that he lost most of his memories, so I decided to take custody of him once when he fully recovers from his injuries."

Roy rose an eyebrow. He did not like the idea of adopting a brother. "He doesn't have a family?"

"I assume that he does, but he doesn't remember them." Eliwood answered. "Besides, I asked if there were any missing persons that matched his description during work. There weren't."

Roy looked out the car's window. "Are we going to the hospital?"

"Yes, we are going to meet him." Eliwood answered calmly.

Although Roy nodded and kept a neutral expression on his face, inside he badly wanted to tell Eliwood that he did not want an adopted brother.

Once when they reached the hospital, the two redheads entered the building. Roy followed Eliwood down the hallways. He shook a bit; he never liked hospitals. When it came to hospitals, the only things he thought of were sicknesses, injuries, and death itself.

"He's here." Eliwood said as he led Roy into a lonely hospital room.

The only patient in this room was an azure-haired male with cerulean eyes and pale skin lying on the bed. His blinked as he gazed at the blank, white ceiling.

When he heard footsteps entering the room, Marth turned to the source of the sound and saw Eliwood walk to his bedside. Behind him was Roy, a mini, younger version of him.

"Hello, Marth." Eliwood greeted. "How are you feeling?"

"Kinda sh-s-sick." Marth answered with a childish frown. "Dr. Mario to-t-told...me d-that I have a... k-cold!"

"I hope you get well quickly." Was Eliwood's cool response. "Marth, I would like you to meet someone." He gestured at Roy to come forward.

When he first looked into Roy's grumpy, navy-blue orbs, the first thing Marth did was clutch his bedcovers with his uninjured, left hand and pulled it in front of his face. As all of his muscles in his body tensed due to his shyness, Marth coyly looked back at Roy, who did not seem to care. Roy looked so grumpy, Marth was a bit scared of him.

"Roy, introduce yourself." Eliwood whispered, urging his son.

Roy sighed. "My name is Roy. It's nice to meet you." To Roy, he was forcing himself to barf out the words.

Blushing madly, Marth gently pushed the covers away. After hesitating for a minute, he smiled timidly at Roy. "I-It's w-weally nice to m-meet you...!" he softly replied, before asking, "R-Rw-Why are y-you guys hewe?"

Eliwood set a gentle hand on Marth's soft, blue hair. Roy quickly looked away in jealousy.

"You still can't remember anything, can you?" he asked.

Marth blinked and looked down sadly. "N-No... I k-can't remember anyding... All I w-remember is... j-just lying on d-the beach."

"Not even someone you know?"

"Just y-you, shome doctors, Woy, and... d-that's it..." Marth sighed, setting a gentle hand on his head.

"It's Roy, not Woy." Roy thought to himself grumpily.

"Marth, I took custody of you." Eliwood began to explain. "Do you know what that means?"

"I d-think so." Marth answered.

"Once when you fully recover, you will be living with us, until you remember something or we find your parents." Eliwood finished.

"Weally?" Marth asked, his eyes sparkling with awe. "I won't b-be alone?"

Eliwood smiled at the bluenette's question. "Really."

Marth's eyes flickered in joy as he smiled brightly at the two redheads. "Da-Thank you!" he exclaimed.

While Eliwood smiled back at Marth, Roy gazed out the window. The rain resumed plunging from the dark, gray sky. This weather's gloomy state perfectly matched Roy's current mental state.

"I hope Marth recovers his memories soon." he thought to himself.

Author's Notes: Yay, Marth has a family!

Here's chapter 3! Just to let you guys now, I'm currently not finished with chapter 5. So expect not-so-quick updates! I'm sorry if Lilina and Wolt aren't Roy's friends in this story. I feel that they are best suited for this role in the story. So, enjoy yourselves, WoltXLilina fans (Or anyone who doesn't like RoyXLilina at all)!

Also, I opened a poll asking what story do you want me to start next. So check it out, ok?

Story Questions:

If two close friends suddenly third-wheeled and treated you disrespectfully, how would you respond to their actions?

Do you think Roy likes Marth?

Do you think Marth will fully recover his memories?

Chapter 4: Chapter 4

Unfortunately for Roy, a month quickly passed. Although he fully recovered from his injuries (He still had trouble pronouncing certain words), Marth still could not remember a single event or a person before he was discovered on the beach.

It was the beginning of June when Marth was finally discharged from the hospital. After changing out of his hospital gown into casual clothes; long jeans, sky-blue shirt, and a dark blue jacket, Marth excitedly followed Eliwood out of the hospital. He was glad to be out of the hospital and see the world outside.

"It's a nice day, isn't it?" Eliwood asked Marth as they walked down the parking lot.

Marth looked up at the clear, blue sky. There was not a single cloud in sky blocking the bright sunlight.

"Y-Yesh." Marth answered. "The bwue sky is w-really clear!"

As Marth looked up at the sky and admired its clear, perfect color, he did not notice a car pulling out of its parking space.

"Look out!" Eliwood cried, grabbing ahold of Marth.

Marth froze in his place like ice. With a frightened whimper, he threw his arms around Eliwood and hugged him tightly for protection. As he awaited something drastically dangerous to occur, Marth buried his white face into the elder's shoulder.

"Marth? It's ok." Eliwood started as he watched the car drive away. "The car is gone."

With a muffled, soft "Y-Yes.", Marth released Eliwood from his tight grip. The two carefully looked for any mobile cars before continuing their way down the lot.

"Be careful next time." Eliwood sternly explained. "If I didn't stop you, the car would've hit you!"

"Hit...m-m-me?" Marth replied. A small smile stretched across his mouth. "Dat means d-that I'll be in the hospital again!" He giggled childishly at his sentence.

Eliwood chuckled at the bluenette's joke and added, "The doctors will be surprised!"

Once when the two got into their car, they began to drive back to the Pheraes' home. During the ride, Marth curiously looked at every single car, building, and pedestrians that walked down the sidewalks and crossed the street. He was amazed by the sight of the city, especially by the people. There were so many of them! Marth pondered on their histories, such as their birthday, jobs, and family.

What was their life like? How were they like? Did they have siblings? Were they wealthy or poor? What did they like to do? These were the questions that echoed repeatedly in Marth's thoughts.

After thirty minutes, the two finally arrived at the Pheraes' house. It was located in a large, urban neighborhood. The house was nearly identical to its peers; it had two stories, a small backyard, a driveway, and a garage. The only difference was, it was painted cardinal red. The other houses had their own colors.

"We're here." Eliwood said as he and Marth got out of the car.

Marth curiously looked around the neighborhood before asking, "Who alsho l-lives hewe?"

Eliwood looked around the neighborhood. "Let's see..." He saw a green-haired lady across the street, near the corner of the neighborhood. She just got out of her clean, white car with a bag of groceries. "Oh, she's Mrs. Palutena!" Eliwood told Marth, pointing at the green-haired neighbor. "Hello Palutena!"

"Hello Eliwood!" Palutena replied with a gentle smile. She took notice of Marth. "Oh, who is he?"

"He's Marth." Eliwood answered. "I'm temporally taking custody of him."

Marth smiled timidly and his shoulders tensed in shyness. "H...He-Hew-Hello." He greeted, waving coyly.

Palutena smiled back at the bashful bluenette. "Aw, how sweet. I'll see you two later!" she said as she entered her house.

Eliwood and Marth watched Palutena shut the door close. "Sh...She's nice." Marth commented. "Who also lives here?"

"Well..." Eliwood pointed to the blue-gray house directly across the street from the Pheraes. "The Greils live over there." He explained. "But, they seem to be busy now."

Eliwood pointed to the olive-green house next to the Pheraes. A sign that read "For sale" was placed on its overgrown lawn. "Nobody lives there, for now... Let's talk about this later. Aren't you hungry?"

"A w-l-l-little..." Marth softly answered.

"I'll make some dinner." Eliwood said as he guided Marth into the house.

When the two entered the house, the first thing Marth noticed was Roy sitting on a couch, listening to music while blankly gazing at the TV, which was turned off.

"Roy, we're back." Eliwood said, earning a small, careless nod from Roy. Eliwood signed quietly and turned to Marth. "Marth, make yourself at home, ok?"

"Ok..." Marth replied.

As Eliwood entered the kitchen and began to cook dinner, Marth went to the couch and sat next to Roy, who did not bother to notice him. He was stuck in his lonely, imaginary world.

"Hey, Woy!. Marth greeted softly with a small grin.

Roy sighed loudly through his nostrils, and faced the opposite direction, pretending that he did not hear Marth.

Marth gave a gentle nudge on Roy's shoulder. "Woy?"

"Leave me alone..." Roy mumbled in annoyance. He wanted to be left alone!

"Woy? What'sh w-w-wrong?" Marth asked worriedly.

"I'm ok." Roy simply answered. "Just leave me alone, ok?"

"But, I wanna b-b-be r-w-with you!" Marth protested with begging puppy eyes.

"Leave me alone, dammit." Roy repeated, his voice rising.

"But I wanna shpend time wid you!" Marth argued again.

All of a sudden, Roy slapped Marth in the face. He was tired of listening to Marth's childlike yet irritating begging. With a weak cry, Marth rubbed his stinging face as tears filled his wide cerulean eyes.

Luckily, Eliwood heard the slap from the kitchen. "What happened?" he asked sternly. He noticed the swollen slap mark on Marth's face; he knew who committed the violent act. "Roy...?" he spoke coldly.

"Look, he was getting on my nerves!" Roy protested.

"Please spend a little time with Marth." Eliwood ordered. "He spent days alone in the hospital. And no, the doctors and nurses don't count."

"Fine..." Roy sighed loudly.

"Thank you." Eliwood thanked before going back to the kitchen.

Roy looked at Marth, who was wiping tears out of his eyes with the sleeve of his jacket.

"Look, I'm sorry for hitting you." Roy apologized. "Do you forgive me?"

"Y... Yes." Marth answered with a tiny smile, like if Roy never struck him with the palm of his hand.

"Do you want to watch TV?" Roy asked, grabbing the remote.

"Shure." Marth answered. He was curious.

With the remote, Roy turned on the TV and flipped to a random channel. It showed a tense soccer game. Although it was exciting to Roy, Marth found it a bit boring. He did not understand soccer at all.

Roy was just silently watching the TV. Marth founded it awkward, as he wanted to talk to the smaller redhead. He wanted to know more about him!

"W-Well... I weally like your h-hair." Marth quietly spoke up.

"My red hair?" Roy replied, eying Marth's azure hair. "Well, thanks."

"You're w-w-really welcome!" Marth replied, smiling innocently.

"To be honest, I rather have your blue hair." Roy continued. "It looks really cool. Besides, people don't make fun of you if you have blue hair."

"Why?" Marth innocently asked.

"I dunno." Roy sighed. "Everyone thinks that blue hair looks cool. Every day in school, these guys call me names because of my hair."

"W-Like what?"

"Period head, tomato brain, blood face, yeah. All of these wonderful names." Roy sarcastically remarked.

Marth gasped. "Dat's so mean! Who c-c-calls you d-these names?"

"My two so-called friends Lilina and Wolt." Roy answered with a sad sign. "They were my friends, until they ganged up on me and treated me like Arcanine shit."

"Why d-did they do dat?"

"I don't know! I'll never understand people! One day, you're their best friend! The next thing you know, you're out of the damn picture and in the trash! I don't know what I did to them! I gave them all the crap I have!"

"Maybe it's deir problem!" Marth replied, trying to cheer Roy up. "They were being jerks, sh-so you must be better than them! What m-makes y-you better d-than them?"

"Well, I had lots of AP classes." Roy began. "Actually wait, I'm only had one. Art history. It's one of the hardest classes in school. Wolt's in Studio art, but I don't consider it a hard class. Friggin' asshole thinks he's the best artist on the campus. Just because you can quickly draw freehanded doesn't mean you're Andy Wailord. Fucking narcissist."

"Watch your language, Roy!" Eliwood strictly called from the kitchen, causing Roy to sigh loudly.

"Well, what color is R-Rw-W-Wolt's hair?" Marth asked as a naughty smile stretched across his face.

"Green." Roy answered. "Lime-green to be exact."

"D-Then Wolt's a lime head!" Marth remarked loudly.

Roy's lips curved into a grin as he began to laugh hysterically. "Lime head?! That's a good one, Marth!"

Marth giggled. "D-Th-Thanks, Woy!"

"I got a better one!" Roy managed to say, breathing quickly for air. "Barf head!"

Marth laughed hysterically at the insult. Eliwood, who was pouring some tomato soap into three bowls and listening to the two teens' conversation, smiled and shook his head sadly. Yes, they were not talking about something positive. However, it sounded like they were having a good time.

"Wh-What about Lilina?" Marth asked.

"Well, she has indigo hair..." Roy started, sounding unsure.

"That's weally hard..." Marth replied. He suddenly got an idea. "Maybe... Bwueberry head?"

Marth and Roy laughed uncontrollably before silencing awkwardly.

"This is getting old..." Roy said, before glancing at the TV. "Everything's getting boring..."

"Yeah..." Marth sighed. "What do we do now?"

"I know what to do now." Eliwood said, joining the conversation. "Eat your dinner."

"Dinner's weady?" Marth asked with wide, sparkling eyes.

"Yes." Eliwood answered. "Let's start dinner."

"Yaaay!" Marth cheered happily as Roy quietly turned off the TV and sighed sadly. Marth gave him a worried look. "Woy, what's wrong?"

Roy jumped and quickly forced a small smile. "I'm ok! C'mon, let's eat!"

Marth followed Roy to the dinner table. Although Roy seemed calm and happy, Marth sensed a feeling of sadness in his heart. What was it? Was Roy faking his joy? Maybe he was annoyed with Marth! But no! Roy was laughing a few moments ago!

Sitting on the dinner table were three bowls of tomato soup, three cups of water, and three plates with steamed vegetables and spaghetti. As soon as he hurriedly sat down, Marth began to quickly munch and slurp his dinner. Roy on the other hand, slowly sat down and began to play with his food.

"Marth, slow down!" Eliwood exclaimed after when he took a slip of water. "You might choke!"

His mouth filled with pasta and tomato sauce, Marth slowly swallowed and hiccuped softly. With a small smile, Eliwood got out of his seat, went to Marth, and gave him strong yet gentle pats on the back, which eventually earned a tiny burp from the bluenette.

"Better?" Eliwood asked.

"Mmmm hmmm." Marth replied quietly, his face blushing red.

"That's good." Eliwood said as he returned to his seat. He took notice of Roy, who was created a small mess of food on his plate. His navy-blue eyes were blankly staring at the slop. "Roy, why aren't you eating?" he asked his son.

"I'm not really hungry..." Roy mumbled in response.

"Please try to eat." Eliwood ordered. "Don't you want to be tall and strong when you grow up?"

"Fine..." Roy groaned with a frown. He picked up his fork and began to slowly eat his spaghetti.

Eliwood sighed softly in frustration and continued to eat his dinner in silence. As he nibbled on his vegetables, Marth looked across the table and noticed an empty seat.

Something, or someone was missing from the Pherae family. She was someone who supported the father of the family and cared for her offspring. Whenever the father was missing in action, it was her duty to protect her children.

That was it! A mother! That was what the Pherae family was missing! But the only question was... Marth looked at Roy and Eliwood, who were silently eating without making eye contact.

...Where was Mrs. Pherae?

Author's Notes: Don't kill me for the "spelling errors"! It was meant to be that way. (It's how Marth pronounces some words!)

Welp, I finally got off my lazy arse and uploaded this chapter! Again, just like what the upper sentence said, the "misspelled words" are actually how Marth pronounces some words. Also, I forgot to mention this, but there will be some mild cussing.

BTW, check out my poll if you hadn't already!

Story Questions:

Do you think it's ok to secretly make fun of people you don't like?

Where do you think is Roy's mother?

Who would you like to see in the story?

Chapter 5: Chapter 5

With a tiny yet exhausted yawn, Marth took a pale-blue washcloth, soaked it with warm water, and gently washed his face. He sighed loudly, as it was a tiring, long day for him. Yes, compared to the lives of others, it was an easy day; Marth did nothing but eat dinner and spend time with Roy, who was slowly yet grudgingly accepting him into his personal, private space. However, it was also his first day out of the hospital, so it was a bit overwhelming for Marth.

After hanging the washcloth and brushing his straight, silky, azure hair, Marth left the small bathroom and went to Roy's room, where a sleeping bag was prepared for him. Roy was sitting on his bed, browsing his Smashbook on his phone. He was so intrigued (actually, disgusted and angered) by his friends' posts, he did not notice Marth entering his room.

"Erm... W...Woy?" Marth shyly started in a soft voice.

"Hmmm, what is it?" Roy asked, looking up from his phone.

Marth's shoulders rose bashfully as he smiled timidly. Roy noticed him. "...W-What are you doing?" he asked, walking up to Roy's bedside.

"Just browsing some things on Smashbook." Roy answered

"What's a Smashbook?" Marth asked again, sitting down. He moved next to Roy and lied down, looking at the phone screen.

"It's where you can post stuff for all of your friends to see." Roy answered.

"How many fwiends do you have?" Marth nosily questioned.

Roy slightly frowned. "Although Smashbook says that I have a lot of them, I actually have a few that actually give a shit about me."

"What do you mean?" Marth asked innocently.

"Let's say that some people add you as a friend." Roy explained. "However, they just do it so they can just say, 'Oh, Roy's my friend.', when they actually don't care much about you. For example, if I ask an important question on Smashbook, it would probably get only likes and if I'm lucky, a short answer. However, when someone popular says they are sad or something, people would ask if they are ok and all that nice stuff. Do you understand?"

"Kinda." Marth replied.

Roy nodded and continued to look through his phone. Bored with nothing to do, Marth took notice of a book shelf that sat next to Roy's bed. Books of all widths, genres, colors, and sizes were stacked neatly in it. They were a bit dusty; they had not been opened nor removed from its place for a loooong time.

Marth carefully got off the bed, went to the shelf, and took a random book. "Woy, do you wanna read dis together with m-me?" he asked, showing the cover to the redhead.

Roy glanced away from his phone and mentally facepalmed. "Lilo and Stitch?" he asked, his tone of voice hinting a sense of disbelief. "That's a kid's book! Don't tell me that you forgot to read!"

Marth childishly stuck his tongue out at Roy before saying, "W-L-Look, I know how to wead!" he protested. "I just want to wead wid y-you!"

"Fine..." Roy sighed as Marth got onto his bed and lied down next to him.

Tolerating his annoyance, Roy read the book out loud to Marth. The story was about an erratic, blue alien who flees from a galactic federalization and takes refuge on Earth. Later, he was mistaken as a dog and adopted by Lilo, a lonely, outcasted, little girl who names him Stitch. After a series of destruction and wreaking havoc, Stitch was finally found by the galactic federalization. However, he was allowed to stay with his new family.

"So in the end, Stitch finally f-found a family, even d-though he's different, wight?" Marth asked Roy as he closed the book.

Roy placed the book on his nightstand and said, "Yep. He wasn't left behind or forgotten." He took a quick glance at the ticking clock, which read 10:30. "Well, it's time to go to sleep now. Even though I'm on summer break now, Dad still wants me to sleep early for some reason."

Marth nodded, got off of the bed, and got into the sleeping bag. "Ok." he yawned, slowly closing his eyes. "Goodnight, W-Woy." he said.

"Goodnight, Marth." Roy replied as he turned off the lights.

As Roy pulled his covers and sighed softly, he turned to his left and looked at the Lilo and Stitch book sitting on the nightstand. It was illuminated by the streetlight's ghostly orange light, which leaked through the window's binds.

"I'm lost." Roy thought to himself unhappily.

Roy's joyless thoughts however, were interrupted by Marth. "Woy?" he asked.

"Yeah?" Roy asked.

"I wonder how is my f-family wike." Marth began. "I mean, m-my weal one."

"Oh, you can't remember your family." Roy spoke, suddenly remembering the fact.

If the lights were still on, Roy would have seen Marth's sad facial expression.

"Yeah..." Marth sighed. "I still can't w-r-remember anyding."

"Well, I bet you have a mom and dad." Roy replied, trying to brighten the mood. "How do you think they are like?"

"Well... Eh..." Marth began unsurely. "I t-think dad is weally kind a-and understanding. Even t-though he wants me to be a-at d-t-the top, he'll still accept me if I sh-s-succeed. As for mom, she is very smart and t-trustworthy! She's not afraid to tell us w-what she thinks!"

"Do you think you have any brothers and siblings?"

"M-Maybe..." Marth yawned, he felt drowsy. "If I h-have a brother or sister, I dink he or she is protective and caring f-for me, even if he or she had gets weally angry at me sometimes."

"That's cool." Roy spoke. "How about your grandparents?"

There was no reply. Curious, Roy slowly sat up and noticed Marth sleeping like a ball of yarn. With a small smile, Roy shut his eyes, lied his head on the pillow, and waited for sleep to claim him.

The next morning, Marth was awoken by a patch of bright sunlight shining into his eyelids. With a small yawn, Marth stretched and sat up, looking at Roy.

"He's still asleep." Marth thought to himself with a small smile. *"I better not wake him up. Maybe Mr. Eliwood is up."*

Marth carefully got out of his sleeping bag and tip-toed out of Roy's room, down the hallway, into Eliwood's room. However, instead of seeing the older redhead sleeping soundly in bed or getting ready for the day, Marth was greeted with a tidy bed and no one in sight.

"Erm... Mr. Eliwood?" Marth asked as he paced around the unoccupied room. He looked under the bed and saw nothing but dust bunnies. "Where are you?"

Unable to find Eliwood, Marth quickly went back to Roy's room. At that moment, Roy was about to leave for the bathroom.

"What's wrong?" Roy asked. "You look kinda nervous, Marth."

"I c-can't find your dad!" Marth replied, twitching his fingers uneasily.

"Oh, he went off to work." Roy explained in order to calm the bluenette. "He's a journalist. Usually, he'll be back around four or five."

"Oh, that's good." Marth said. "Sho, what a-are we going to d-do today?"

"We're going to meet up with my friend Pit at the game arcade." Roy explained.

"Pit?" Marth asked softly. "Is he weally your friend?"

Roy smiled slightly. "Yeah, he's not one of these phony-balconies. He's the only friend who I trust."

"How is he?" Marth asked again. "He must be weally n-nice!"

"He is nice, but he could be kinda weird sometimes." Roy answered. "You'll see when we meet him."

After getting dressed and eating a quick breakfast, Roy and Marth left their house. As Roy locked the front door, Marth noticed a brunet, fourteen-year-old boy standing in front of Palutena's house, patiently waiting for someone. What made him stood out was the pair of angelic, white wings on his back.

"Who is d-that?" Marth asked, pointing to the brunet.

Roy put the key back in his pants pocket. "That's Pit! Let's go!"

Pit's indigo eyes lit up like sparks when he saw Roy and Marth cross the street and approach him. A smile spreading across his face, he waved and exclaimed, "Hey Roy!"

"Hey, Pit." Roy replied with a small smile.

Pit noticed Marth, who was timidly standing behind Roy; he seemed to be cowering.

"Who is this?" Pit curiously asked.

"Oh, this is Marth." Roy introduced. "He's staying at my place for now."

"Hello, Marth!" Pit greeted cheerfully. "I'm Pit! Nice to meet you!"

Instead of replying, Marth crept behind Pit and eyed his wings. A spark of interest and curiosity flickered in his cerulean eyes.

"Are these w-real?" Marth asked out loud. He suddenly set his hands onto Pit's delicate wings and abruptly pulled them.

"Aggh!" Pit screamed in pain. Marth immediately released the wings and blinked awkwardly. "That hurt!"

"Sorry..." Marth softly apologized. "I didn't know..."

"It's ok!" Pit answered happily, like if nothing happened. "Should we get going to the game arcade now?"

"Sure." Roy answered.

The three teens began to head to the game arcade. After a series of walking down the sidewalks, passing several homes, buildings, and stores, and crossing the street, the three finally arrived at the game arcade. On the top of the sore was a colorful, neon sign that simply read "game arcade". Through the window, were several people playing with the game machines, such as a maze game with four ghosts that constantly chased the player.

"Are we here?" Marth asked with awe, wide eyes.

"Yep!" Pit answered cheerily. "This is it!"

Marth's smiled widened with excitement. "What are waiting for? Let's go!" With a tiny laugh, he hurried into the game arcade, not exactly looking where he was going.

Roy's once-calm eyes widened in terror. "Hey Marth, look out!"

It was too late. With a small gasp, Marth bumped into someone exiting the arcade. Marth looked up at the person he abruptly collided with large, cerulean eyes. Although the stranger was smiling, in a split second, his joy suddenly turned into boiling anger.

"Hey, watch where you're going!" the stranger shouted in fury.

Marth froze in his spot, unable to move or do anything. The stranger was a teenager close to his age, only that he was much taller and a bit bigger than he was. His indigo hair fell over his angry, glaring cobalt eyes.

"I'm sorry, I wasn't w-l-looking!" Marth tried to quickly apologize. "I—!"

The stranger suddenly shoved Marth out of his way, causing him to tumble onto the ground. With a shaky gasp, tears began to roll down his face as Marth began to wail hysterically in both pain and fright. His cry exclaimed throughout the street like a blaring alarm. A few people in the arcade glanced at the scene before returning to their business.

"Will you just stop crying, damn it!" the stranger yelled, raising his hand, about to strike Marth.

"Stop it, Ike!" Roy suddenly shouted. Without thinking about it, Roy grabbed Ike's hand and slapped it. Pit quickly covered his eyes with his shaking hands, too scared to watch the scene.

"Oh, it's you." Ike leered frightfully. Roy's face turned pale; he had never done that before! "Are you going to fight for you friend now? Or are you going to run away like you did during lunch?"

"Well, I..." Roy started, trying to reply quickly. Luckily, someone saved him frm the dire situation.

"Ike, what is this?!" a fourteen-year-old girl with light, brown hair asked as she quickly exited the arcade.

"Mist, I—" Ike started, before his younger sister cut him off.

"Ike, I don't want you to start another commotion, ok?" Mist scolded. Marth wiped his eyes and began to listen to the conversation. "We were having a great day! Let's just go!"

"Ok, fine." Ike sighed. He began to follow Mist down the street, away from the arcade. However, he gave Roy and his friends a dreadful, spine-tingling, glare.

"Oh my god, that was close!" Roy whimpered in fear.

"That was awesome!" Pit said, trying to lighten the mood. "You actually tried to cut off Ike! I never saw anyone do that before... Well besides Mist that is."

However, Roy heeded no attention to Pit's compliments. He was worried about Marth. "Hey Marth, are you all right?" Roy asked as he helped Marth up to his feet.

Marth sniffed, his face pink from crying. "I'm ok..." he softly said, a bit shaken.

"Don't worry, that jerk Ike is gone!" Pit said, trying to make Marth smile.

Marth smiled slightly, before it fell to a frown. "That was weally scary..." he whined quietly.

"Do you still want to go to the game arcade?" Roy asked.

Marth shakily forced a smile. "Sure. Let's go." he answered, trying to erase the terrifying moments that just happened.

Author's Notes: When I think of game arcades, I think of Pac-Man.

OT: Here's chapter 5! I hope you guys aren't bothered by the OOCness in this fanfic, especially with Roy, Marth, and Ike. (I think Pit's all right.) In future chapters however, you'll see why certain characters are behaving the way they are! And yes, I needed to include Disney's Lilo and Stitch story in here. I think it matches the theme, so I don't own the movie or story!

Story Questions:

Do you think Facebook or any social media is a popularity contest?

How do you think is Marth's true family?

What is with Ike?

Chapter 6: Chapter 6

After a few hours, Marth, Roy, and Pit left the game arcade and began to head down the city street. It was near three in the afternoon; the three teens spent a lot of time playing video games. Unlike time, which seemed to continue on and on for eternity, hunger eventually filled their stomach with empty feelings, making them feel extremely famished and weak. As the three friends walked down the store while passing many shops and speeding cars, they began to talk about what to eat.

"I'm hungry!" Pit said bubbly. "What about you guys?"

Marth's stomach played the rumbling song of its people, which instantly answered Pit's question.

"Me too." Roy replied. He sighed in exhaustion. "Should we have pizza at the pizza joint?"

"Sure!" Pit piped with a large smile. "I got lots of money!"

"Did you rob a bank or something?" Roy teased.

"N-No!" Pit exclaimed in shock. "I-I just saved it up!"

"Where is dis...p-pizza joint thingy?" Marth asked curiously.

"Right across the street!" Pit answered cheerfully, as he and his friends stopped at a red light. He pointed to a small pizza restaurant across the street. It had large glass windows and a large sign that shouted pizza to those who happened to pass by. Inside, were many seats, a small salad bar, and a few TVs. A few people were inside, either waiting for their order impatiently or enjoying the Italian cuisine.

When the light finally turned green, the three hurried towards the restaurant.

"Hurry!" Pit exclaimed. "There isn't a line! Let's get there quickly!"

All of a sudden, Roy remembered something terrifying. "Wait, hold on!" he screamed, causing all of his friends to come to a complete halt.

Marth inhaled and exhaled loudly. "What's... What's wrong, Woy?"

"Doesn't Ike work here?" Roy asked.

The name "Ike" shot down Pit's back like a ghostly chill. The angel shivered nervously. "Yeah..." he answered uneasily. "Well, maybe he isn't working today."

"Let's check." Roy replied.

Confused, Marth followed Roy and Pit, who sneakily crept to the windows on their knees. Hoping that no one would notice them leering cautiously around like a scared cat, Pit and Roy's scrolled around the area, identifying the workers in the joint.

"Do you see him?" Roy whispered.

"No, I don't." Pot answered.

The two sighed in relief. Marth rose an eyebrow. Ok, that Ike guy was pretty terrifying! But, he could not be that terrifying, can he? He just violently pushed him down when he accidentally bumped into him! He (probably) did not commit any crimes or murders.

"Soooo, are we having p-pizza?" Marth finally asked, breaking the silence amount the two.

"Err, yeah." Roy answered. "Let's go in, ok?"

In just twenty minutes, which felt like five minutes for Marth, the three were munching down a medium-prized pepperoni pizza and slurping on ice-cold sodas. Marth was amazed; he never tasted anything like this before! It was better than Eliwood's cooking! He wanted to have pizza again tomorrow! However, deep inside, he knew he could not. The price for the pizza made a large, barren realm for Pit's wallet.

"Guys?" Marth softly spoke up.

Pit and Roy stopped eating and carefully swallowed their intake. "What is it?" Roy asked.

"What's wrong with I-Ike?" Marth asked.

"What's wrong with Ike?" Pit replied with large eyes in shock. "Ike is the definition of wrong! He's pure evil!"

"Weally?" Marth gasped.

"Don't listen to Pit." Roy spoke up with a reassuring smile. "He's exaggerating. Anyway, Ike's a bully in school."

"How?" Marth asked.

"Anything that gets in his way makes him really angry." Roy explained. "It doesn't matter if he was having a good or bad day. Anything can make him explode in anger!"

"For some reason, he really hates Roy and me." Pit sighed unhappily. "I just don't know why... If either of us happen to run into him before lunches, he demands us for our lunch money. He's so scary... I always give him all of my money! I don't wanna get hurt!"

"Why don't you tell y-your teachers a-about it?" Marth asked. "They k-can help, wight?"

"We did... It never works." Roy bluntly and solemnly answered. "After a short while, Ike would continue to bother us."

"It's best to endure it." Pit said. "Besides, if I remember correctly, Ike's graduating this year."

"Yeah..." Roy replied with a nod.

Marth nodded in understanding as he sipped his grape soda.

In about thirty minutes, the teens finished their meal and began to head home. Hundreds of cars began to overcrowd the street; for many people, work was over for them. However, people, mainly the ones who had simple jobs; such as working in fast food restaurants, were still working.

"That was fun, wasn't it?" Pit asked cheerfully.

Like the flame of ecstasy, Roy's happiness suddenly burned out. "Well, yeah it was!" he answered, trying to fake a tone of joy in his voice.

Unlike Pit, who was a bit gullible and took Roy's sentence as truth, Marth caught a tang of sadness that hung loosely at the end of Rots words. What was it? It did not seem right... Why was Roy like this? Does he have a hard time expressing his happiness? Or was he actually miserable in the inside?

The three arrived at Pit's home.

"So, if you have any plans, text me, ok?" Pit asked, as he went to the doorstep.

"Ok! See you later, Pit!" Roy shouted.

"Bye, Pit!" Marth piped up.

"Goodbye!" Pit said as he unlocked the door and entered his house. "Mom! I'm home!" he joyfully exclaimed as he door shut.

Hearing Pit cry out these words, Roy miserably looked down at the ground and sighed unhappily. The word "Mom" struck his emotional cord of despair. It was a word that he despised and hated to hear, especially if it came from the mouth of a teenager or a small child.

"The word 'mom'..." Roy thought to himself, suddenly lost in a dark, lonely world. *"When was the last time I said that word?"*

"Erm, Woy?" Marth spoke up. "Are you o-ok?"

Roy quickly snapped out of his daydream. "Y-Yeah, I'm ok!" he answered, taking a quick look at his home. He noticed Eliwood's car parked on the driveway. "Hey, Dad's home! Let's go!"

When Roy and Marth entered their home, they saw Eliwood sitting on the sofa, talking on the phone quite loudly, which was a bit strange to Marth. When he first met the older redhead, Eliwood was soft-spoken to the point that he seemed shy. However as Marth eventually learned, it was part of his polite personality.

Unlike Marth, who was curiously wondering who Eliwood was talking to, Roy gazed angrily at the ground. A pitch-black shadow covered his glaring, furious eyes.

*"Oh great, he's talking to **her** again..."* Roy thought grouchily to himself.

"What should we d-do, Woy?" Marth whispered, trying not to disturb Eliwood.

"Leave Dad alone." Roy grouchily answered as he went towards the stairs.

As Roy went up the stairs, Marth quickly followed him. "W-Wait, where are y-you going?!" he softly asked.

"To my room." Roy grumbled. "I'm just tired, ok? There's nothing wrong."

Marth followed Roy up the stairs. Once when Roy entered his room, Marth sighed quietly as he looked around the hallways, trying to figure out what to do next. Well, it looked like Roy wanted time alone, so he could not be with him.

After a few moments, Marth decided to explore Eliwood's room. Like a nosy, small child, he wanted to know what was in its drawers. Before entering the older redhead's room, Marth peered down the stairs to make sure Eliwood was not looking. To his favor, he was still chatting on the phone, not paying any attention.

Marth sneakily crept into Eliwood's room. Once when he was inside, the first thing the curious bluenette did was nosily open the small drawer that sat next to the bed. It had a large picture frame, a handgun, and a small box full of bullets.

Marth was intrigued by the handgun. With an interested gleam in his wide, cerulean eyes, he took the gun and began to observe it. He had never seen something like this before. What did it do? Marth then picked up the tiny box, opened it, and looked at the small, yet dangerous bullets. Did these little things go into this big thingy? Marth looked at the bullets carefully. He was so intrigued, he did not hear nor notice Eliwood entering the room.

"Marth! What are you doing?!" Eliwood suddenly asked.

Marth jumped in surprise and turned around, the gun still in his hands. "I'm j-just checking this o-out." he answered. "What is it? A-And what does it d-do?"

"It's a gun." Eliwood answered calmly. "It is something that can hurt or even kill people. Please put it away, Marth."

With a small nod, Marth set the gun back into the drawer. He took notice of the picture frame and picked it up, looking at its content.

"Mr. Eliwood, who a-are d-these people?" Marth asked, showing Eliwood the photo. There was a young, cardinal-haired man and a beautiful, ice-blue-haired woman holding a little boy, a miniature version of the man.

"Oh, that's me, Roy, and my wife Ninian about ten years ago." Eliwood answered, hoping that Marth would ask no more questions.

"Ninian?" Marth softly said. "Where is s-she?"

"She's in a far, unreachable place in the sky." Eliwood lightly clutched his fists as he said these words.

"K-Can she visit?"

"Sometimes, but we can't see her." Eliwood clutched his fists tighter.

"Why?"

Eliwood tried to blink away his tears as he said, "Last year, Ninian passed away due to an illness she was fighting for many years."

"An illness?" Marth blinked in confusion. "K-Couldn't the doctors make h-her better like m-me?"

"There is so much that a doctor could only do..." Eliwood sighed sadly. As soon as he said those sentences, he quickly turned away and covered his face with his hands as he began to weep shakily.

Marth set the picture back into the drawer and went closer to Eliwood. "Mr. Eliwood? Are y-you ok?"

"I'm ok..." Eliwood replied as he continued to cry. "It's just that... I miss her... I-I..."

Marth embraced Eliwood. "It's o-ok... Let i-it all out, ok? I'm by your shide." he soothingly said.

After a few minutes, Marth released Eliwood from his hug. Although his eyes were pink and a bit puffy from crying, Eliwood's expression had a small smile.

"Feel better?" Marth asked.

"Y...Yes." Eliwood sniffer and wiped his tears. "Thank you, Marth."

The sound of a large truck stopping with a screeching halt near the front of their house caught the two's attention. Wondering what was happening, they went to Roy's room, where they could see the event. Roy, who also heard the noise, was watching the scene.

"Hey Roy, what's happening?" Eliwood asked.

"I think we're getting new neighbors." Roy said. He pointed to people opening the back of the moving truck and unloading its contents.

Author's Notes: No Pit, the true definition of "pure evil" is school starting again.

Just a heads up that I'm having difficulty writing the chapters, so updates might be slow! I'm suspecting that I'm suffering from the effects of writers' block, but I think it's having to do with having difficulty with describing things in stories. Again, if the OOC is really bad, just hold on! The future chapters will explain why some of the characters are acting this way!

PS: Check out my poll if you hadn't!

Story Questions:

What's your favorite junk food?

Who do you think Eliwood was talking to on the phone?

Who do you think is the Pherae's new neighbors?

Chapter 7: Chapter 7

A pale-green van parked behind the truck. Wondering how their new neighbors looked like, the three watched the van's passengers get out of their vehicle. A middle-aged man with light, blond hair and aqua-blue eyes carefully helped his pregnant wife out of the car. At the same time, three boys of different ages hurried out of the van.

"C'mon, Colin and Link!" Toon exclaimed excitedly, his small, pointy ears twitching happily. A strong accent rang in his voice. "Let's check out the house!"

"I'm comin'!" Colin called, hurrying after Toon. He turned to the dirty-blond, older Hylian, who was setting a thick-covered book about nature back in his backpack. "Hurry, Link!"

"Fine, fine!" Link called back with a small smile. "I need to help unload, though. I'll join ya guys later!"

As he watched Link set his stuff in the car and hurry towards the moving truck, Roy noticed something quite odd. Unlike his father, mother, and youngest(?) brother, Link had pointy ears, which was indication that he was a Hylian, not a human. Why was that? Then again, his other younger brother had pointy ears too. Maybe one of his parents had a tad of Hylian blood in their veins.

"What a big family." Roy remarked.

Eliwood nodded in response. "Why don't we meet them now?" he suggested.

"Now?!" Roy exclaimed. "Why not tomorrow?"

To be honest, Roy was not in the mood to meet new people.

"I think it is best if we meet the today." Eliwood countered. "Besides, there are boys near your age! They might have something interesting to tell you!"

"Fine..." Roy sighed. He turned to talk to Marth. "C'mon, Marth. Let's— Wait, where did he go?" The bluenette was nowhere to be seen in Roy's room.

Wanting to get a closer look at the new arrivers, Marth curiously yet quietly and shyly hid in the shadowy corner of his home and peered at the family. While Toon and Colin were racing around the lot and somewhat getting in the way, Link and his (assumed) father were uploading boxes filled with items into the home. Marth's curious eyes caught sight of Link's and Toon's pointy ears. Whoa, were these pointy ears real?

Marth wanted to get a closer look! Not wanting to get caught spying, he quietly snuck of the corner and took cover behind Eliwood's car. He carefully watched Link and his family travel back and forth from the truck with items and the house empty handed.

"Toon! Colin! Why don't ya guys help?" Link suddenly asked sternly, raising an eyebrow as he gazed at the younger males. He set several boxes on the ground and set his hands on both of his hips. "Ya guys are big enough to help!"

"We don't wanna!" Toon replied as he and Colin pouted at Link. "It looks too tiring to do!"

"If you guys help, I promise to give y'all half of my dessert durin' dinner." Link offered with a small, trusting smile.

"We'll help! We'll help!" Colin and Toon exclaimed quickly as they hurried towards the moving truck. With all their might, they unloaded boxes and carried them into the house. Link chuckled to himself and watched his younger brothers. Finally, they began to help instead of just taking up space!

At that moment, Link looked at the next-door, cardinal house. His eyes wandered onto the blue car parked on its driveway and noticed Marth quietly watching him from the distance. As soon as when azure eyes made contact with cerulean eyes, Marth timidly slid away from view. Link awkwardly blinked. Who was that?

"Link!" Toon cried out to the older Hylian, who instantly snapped out of his thoughts. "Just because we're workin' doesn't mean you can take a break now!"

"Oh— ok! Sorry! I got distracted!" Link called back.

Marth's face was completely red in embarrassment when Roy and Eliwood exited the house. Oh my gosh, he just made eye-contact with a stranger! It felt so awkward!

"What's wrong, Marth?" Roy asked.

Marth gasped softly and quickly shook his head. His face became redder. "N-Nothing!" he cried out.

"Are you afraid to meet our new neighbors?" Eliwood asked Marth, earning a tiny nod.

"Y...Yeah." Marth sighed quietly.

"Let's meet them together, ok?" Eliwood replied.

Marth nodded again, stood up, and followed Eliwood and Roy. However, as they got closer to the newcomers, Marth began to walk behind Roy. Even with the two redheads, Marth was still a bit timid.

Link took notice of the three. "Hey, are y'all our neighbors?" he asked.

"Yes, we are." Eliwood answered with a small smile. "My name is Eliwood. This is my son Roy, and my stepson Marth."

Link politely shook Eliwood's, Roy's, and Marth's hands. "It's nice meetin' ya! My name is Link!"

Suddenly, Marth stepped out and went to Link. Did he overcome his shyness for once?

Marth eyed Link's pointy ears. "Are t-these w-real?" he asked, as he set his hands on both of Link's ears. He gently pinched them.

Link cried out, jumped, and twitched his ears. "A-Ah!"

"I'm sorry!" Roy immediately apologized. "Marth was just wondering if your ears were real! He's just curious! He didn't mean to hurt you!"

"It's cool, he didn't hurt me." Link replied with a small smile. "My ears are just a bit sensitive."

"Link, are these our neighbors?" Rusl asked.

"Yeah!" Link answered. "Everyone, this is my Dad!"

"Hello, name's Rusl." Rusl introduced.

Eliwood shook Rusl's right hand. "My name is Eliwood. It's very nice to meet you."

As Eliwood's and Rusl's conversation began to drag on, Marth and Roy learned that Rusl's family moved from a neighboring state known as Hyrule due to Rusl's job. (His office moved to Smashburg.) Although his children (Mainly Toon and Colin) were hesitant and unwilling to move, they eventually accepted the fact thanks to Link.

Tired of listening to the adults' conversation, Marth turned to Link and asked, "W-Link? Why do you have p-pointy ears?"

Link smiled softly. "It's because I'm a Hylian. So is my biological little brother Toon."

Marth blinked awkwardly. "What d-do you mean biowogikal?"

"Toon and I are related." Link answered, trying to hold in his laughter. Marth sounded like an innocent, little child.

"Then w-why does your mom and dad h-have round ears?" Marth questioned.

"Toon and I were adopted." Link answered. Knowing what Marth would ask next, he asked a question to him. It was his turn! "Hey Marth, what do you like to do?"

"I weally like to spend time with Woy!" Marth answered bubbily, turning around to face Roy. "Huh? Woy?"

Roy was nowhere to be seen. That was funny, he was there a few moments ago... Why did he leave? Maybe he had to use the restroom... Or maybe... Marth's cerulean eyes lowered in guilt.

Link noticed Marth's unhappy expression. "Hey Marth, what's wrong?"

"Oh, Woy w-ran off somewhere!" Marth gasped.

At that moment, Palutena and Pit, who noticed the arrival of Rusl and his family, decided to greet the newcomers. After getting out of their house, Palutena introduced herself to Rusl, while Pit joined Marth and Link.

"Hey, Marth!" Pit greeted cheerfully.

"Hi, Pit!" Marth replied with a large smile. "Pit, meet W-Link!"

"Hello, Link!" Pit greeted, shaking Link's right hand.

"It's nice meetin' ya, Pit!" Link smiled calmly.

"Marth, where's Roy?" Pit asked with large, indigo eyes.

"I think h-he went b-back inside." Marth answered. "I'll g-go get him!"

Sitting on his bed and alone in his room, Roy silently looked down at his meet as he listening to his sad yet calming music on his phone. Although there were many people outside socializing cheerfully, Roy refused to join the crowd.

To Roy, socializing with other people, especially when they were near his age, was like talking to statues facing each other. Although it seemed like they were having a great conversation, no matter how loud he spoke, yelled, or shrieked and how urgent his pleas were, the statues never turned and listened to him. It was like if Roy was a shadow. He was there, yet nobody bothered to notice him.

With a sad sigh, Roy gazed at a sloppy, messy painting he did as a five-year-old hung on the wall. Being a naïve, unsuspecting child, he stroked a slash of bright, flaming, red painting through a calm, tranquil sea of mellow, blue paint. As a child, it looked perfectly fine and acceptable. However, as Roy grew older, he noticed that it did not look fine. The red paint stood out like a black sheep in a herd of white sheep. No matter what, the red paint could never fit in.

Roy's depressing thoughts were interrupted by Marth entering his room.

"Woy?" Marth asked worriedly. "Why d-did you leave?"

Roy did not answer. Although his music was not blasting into his ears, he pretended that he did not hear Marth.

"Woy? Pwease answer." Marth replied.

Roy sighed loudly before answering, "I just don't fit in, ok?"

"What do you mean?" Marth sat down next to Roy.

"Look, when it comes to socializing, people just don't notice me, ok?" Roy explained grumpily. "I'm just there to take up space."

"Woy, let's shpend time with Link a-and the others!" Marth suggested quietly. "They'll notice you!"

"No." Was Roy's blunt reply.

"C'mon!" Marth cried out, grabbing ahold of Roy's limp arm.

Roy slapped Marth's hand away, earning a small gasp from the shocked bluenette. "No!"

Marth gave Roy a comical, grouchy look before his cerulean eyes wandered onto Roy's phone, which was sitting next to him. Without warning, Marth quickly unplugged Roy's headphones, snatched Roy's phone off the bed, and shoved it deeply into his pants pocket.

"Hey, give it back!" Roy exclaimed with an angry gleam in his eyes.

Marth childishly stuck his tongue at Roy. "I w-will if you c-catch me!"

Like a certain blue hedgehog, Marth sped out of Roy's room with the redhead hot on his trail. As they dashed through the hallways and quickly walked down the stairs, Roy's annoyance and rage eventually turned into joy and laughter, as his inner child fled from the lonely cage in his heart. When Marth heard Roy's laughter, he giggled softly. It seemed that Roy was in a better mood!

Finally, Marth and Roy ran outside and stopped at Link and Pit, who looked at them with strange looks. Breathing loudly in tireness, Roy looked at Marth and said, "Marth, give me back my phone, ok?"

"Only i-if you promise to t-talk to Link a-and Pit." Marth replied with an uncharacteristic, smug grin. He took out Roy's

phone and held it up.

"Fine." Roy responded.

With a small nod, Marth gave the phone back to Roy, who slipped it into his pants' pocket.

"I k-came back with Roy, g-guys!" Marth told Link and Pit with a large smile.

"All right!" Link replied. He took notice of Pit's angelic wings. "Whoa, Pit, are those real?" Link set his hands on Pit's wings and stroked them.

Pit yelped and jolted away with large, frightened eyes. "Y-yes they are! Don't pull on them, please!"

"I'm sorry..." Link said quietly.

"It's Marth's fault." Roy teased. "This morning, he pulled on Pit's wings really hard!"

"Gee, Woy!" Marth yelled out loud. "W-Why are y-you bwaming me!?"
Pit and Link both laughed at the two stepbrothers. As he giggled, Pit looked across the street and noticed the Greil family exiting their house, about to meet their new neighbors. Among the members was Ike, who stood behind his sister Mist. A jolt of alarm and panic struck Pit's emotions. Shoot... He was coming! He and his friends needed to hide before Ike could beat them up.

"Guys! Guys!" Pit hissed to his friends in alarm. "Ike's coming!"

"Eeek!" Marth cried out.

"Let's hide in Link's house until he's gone!" Roy said, turning to look at Ike quickly. "Follow us, Link!"

"Y-Yes!" Link replied quickly, not actually knowing what was happening.

As he and his friends hurried into Link's home in effort to get away from Ike, Marth turned around and accidentally looked at Ike directly into his cobalt eyes. Before he turned around, Marth noticed a spark of loneliness and hurt flicker in Ike's orbs, which looked down at his feet.

Author's Notes: Poor Ike?

OT: Here's chapter 7! Apparently, the writer's block thing wore off me quickly so I managed to finish this quickly.

In this story, I decided to give Link and his family a southern accent. I mean, in Twilight Princess, Link and his friends lived in Ordon Village, which is kinda like a ranch or farm. I don't think his accent should provide problems and make him look OOC. Besides, I think it'll be important in later chapters.

Story Questions:

When is comes to socializing, are you the blue paint, or the red paint?

What do you think happened to Link's biological parents?

Do you think the asylum should eventually learn that Marth is still alive?

Chapter 8: Chapter 8

With a small sigh, Marth wrapped a towel around his waist as he carefully stepped out of the shower. For him, today was a busy day for him; busier than yesterday. First, he and Roy spent a day at the arcade and the pizza joint. Next, he met Link and his family, his new neighbors. Was this how life actually was?

After dressing in his pajamas, Marth went to brush his teeth. In celebration of their arrival in Smashburg, Rusl and his family hosted a dinner party for his new neighbors. (Although Ike was there, Marth and his friends still avoided him by sitting together in the backyard.) The dinner was delicious and fine, however Marth unwisely ate a large chunk of cheese that had bits of green, mold-like stuff in it, making his breath smell terrible for the rest of the party. The strange, sour taste still lingered in his mouth when Marth got into the shower. Now, Marth was willing to do anything to rid the nasty taste from his tongue.

Marth noticed that the tube of toothpaste was completely empty. After tossing the useless tube in the trash, Marth began to look around the bathroom for a fresh, new tube. He first checked the mirror cabinet.

No, there was not a single tube of toothpaste waiting for Marth. Its contents only included a box of bandages, antibiotics, some medicines, and—

A tiny bottle of pills.

Marth was a bit curious. What were these things? Candy? Marth took the bottle and looked at its label.

"Antidepressants... Woy Pherae?" Marth said to himself. "Take one per day."

What was an antidepressant? Marth looked at the pills one more time before setting them back into the cabinet. Although he did not know what an antidepressant was, he knew that it was specially prescribed to Roy.

After brushing his teeth, Marth went into Roy's room. It was pitch-black upon arriving. The only source of light was the streetlight's ghostly beam creeping through the window blinds. Marth was a bit scared; was Roy in here? He nervously stepped in and peered around.

"...W-Woy?" he nervously spoke. "Are you in hewe?"

"I'm here." Roy's voice answered.

Marth sighed softly in relief as he carefully went into the shadowy room and crawled into his sleeping bag.

"Sorry, I was really tired." Roy explained. "I can't really sleep with the lights on."

"It's o-ok." Marth replied. He yawned quietly as he set his head on the pillow. "So, w-what do you dink of Link?"

"He's pretty nice and cool." Roy answered.

"I agree." Marth nodded sleepily.

"Marth?"

"Y-Yeah?"

"...Erm, thanks for...noticing me gone." Roy thanked.

"No prob!" Marth replied. Roy thought he saw a smile on Marth's face. "I j-just don't w-want you to be lonely!"

"Nobody did that for me, before." Roy continued.

"Why?"

Roy sadly looked at the ceiling. "I dunno." He sighed. "People are just like that, I guess..."

"I see..." Marth quickly changed the subject. "So, w-what are w-we doing tomorrow?"

"Well, Pit wants to show Link around Smashburg." Roy explained. "He wants us to tag along."

"Where are we going?" Marth asked.

"He wants to show Link the wharf near the beach. It's next to where Dad found you."

"Dat sounds cool." Marth yawned softly. "I'm tired..."

"Same here." Roy yawned. "I'm going to sleep now. Goodnight."

Marth shut his eyes. "Goodnight."

The next day, Roy and Marth went to the wharf. It was a series of stores and restaurants on a humongous, wooden pier. It was a busy place, as hundreds of people were bustling in and out of gift shops, restaurants, and even a small supermarket that sold smelly seafood. As they watched strangers pass by them without a care, Roy and Marth waited patiently for Link and Pit.

"Do you k-know when d-they are coming?" Marth asked.

"They should be here now." Roy said, as he checked his phone.

Marth stood up on the bench and looked around for the two. Through the sea of people, he noticed a pair of wings and pointy ears protruding out the crowd.

"Look! They're here!" Marth exclaimed, pointing at Pit and Link, who went towards him and Roy.

"Sorry that we were late." Pit apologized. "It was kind hard to get through the crowd."

"So, where do we go now?" Roy asked.

"Let's just hang around." Pit explained. "If we see something interesting, we'll check it out!"

"All right." Link spoke.

With that, the four began their trip around the wharf. After venturing in gift shops, markets, and a video game store, the four finally stopped at an ice cream parlor. They decided that they have been wandering around the boiling weather for too long and needed a break in the cool shade.

"I never tried i-ice cream before." Marth said as they entered the parlor.

"Well, there are lots of flavors to try." Pit said.

"Which o-one's the best?" Marth asked.

"Personally, I like chocolate." Roy suggested. "Pit on the other hand likes vanilla. I'm not sure about Link, though."

"I prefer cookie dough ice cream." Link answered.

"Well, take a look at the ice creams." Roy said. "When you make your decision, let me know."

A few moments later, Marth and his friends were sitting outside of the parlor, enjoying their sweet treat. While Roy was eating his chocolate ice cream with a fork (He accidentally dropped his when he left the parlor. Pit got a fork from a hotdog stand.), Pit was licking the melting vanilla ice cream off his waffle cone, and Link was chewing on the cookie dough in his ice cream, Marth was enjoying his special sundae, which consisted of a scoop of vanilla, chocolate, and cookie dough ice cream.

"It's really good." Marth said. He shivered from the coldness of the dessert.

"I know, right?" Pit replied.

Roy nodded and looked up at Marth. "Which ice cream flavors do you like the most?"

"I kan't decide." Marth sighed.

As he enjoyed his treat, Roy noticed certain lime-green-haired and blue-haired couple walking towards the parlor. Their arms around each other, they exchanged sweet words with each other. To some strangers, they seemed to be a typical, teenage couple. However, to those who actually know them (mainly Roy), they were two of the worst people in existence.

"Hey Roy and Pit." Lilina greeted with a small smile.

"Hey Wolt and Lilina." Pit and Roy replied. While Pit had a smile on his face, Roy glowered angrily at the ground.

Wolt pointed to Marth and Link. "Who are these guys?"

"Oh, this is Marth and Link." Roy answered, internally wishing that the lovesick couple would get out of his face. "Marth's staying at my place for now, and Link just moved in."

"That's cool." Wolt replied, sounding a bit careless.

"Are y'all friends or somethin'?" Link asked, his accent proudly booming in his voice.

"Yeah, we are." Pit simply answered. It was obvious that he was manipulated by Wolt's and Lilina's charisma.

Lilina gave Link a strange look. "Why do you talk that way?" she asked.

"It's my accent." Link answered. "Got it from my 'rents."

"Sorry if you're offended, I just wanted to ask!" Lilina replied quickly, trying to not make herself look as bad as she seems.

Just as when Lilina finished her sentence, Wolt noticed Roy jabbing his ice cream with his fork like if he was eating steak. "Is that a fork?" he asked.

"Yeah, what about it?" Roy replied, glaring at the green-haired male.

"No offense, but what the heck wrong with you?" Wolt remarked impolitely. "You're supposed to eat ice cream with a spoon!"

Irked by the two's disrespectfulness, which was oblivious to Pit and Link, Marth suddenly stood up from his seat and directly faced the couple. "Look, there's notding w-wrong!" he spoke sternly, not knowing what he got himself into.

"The way you talk... Is that another accent?" Lilina asked ignorantly.

"No, it's a speech impairment." Roy bluntly answered. "Marth got into an accident, ok?"

"Sorry, didn't know that~!" Lilina replied, making Roy roll his eyes.

"Where are you guys going?" Pit asked.

"We are heading to the movie theater." Wolt answered, wrapping a protective arm around Lilina's shoulders. "We are going to watch the movie Melted."

"That's neat!" Pit said. "It's a pretty good movie!"

Lilina checked the time on her phone. "Hey Wolt, the movie's gonna start in fifteen minutes!"

"Right." Wolt said to his girlfriend, before turning to his other friends. "We have to go now! See you guys later!"

"Bye!" Pit and Link waved goodbye at the two, who began to head away. Roy just looked away from them. Marth sighed quietly to himself.

"So, what do you think of Wolt and Lilina?" Pit asked Link.

"They are pretty cool people." Link answered with a small smile.

"They are cool, until they start looking down at you."Roy thought to himself, remembering the terrible feeling.

At that moment, Link's phone let out a chime, indicating that he received a text message. With an "Oh!", he quickly took the phone out of his pocket and read the message.

"Dad says that I need to get back." Link told his friends. "He needs some help with unloadin' some boxes."

"Aw, man." Pit sighed in sadness. "Well, let's go back home. Even though Mom told me I could stay out here as long as I want, I don't want Link getting lost."

"We understand." Roy said as Marth nodded.

With that, the four quickly finished their ice cream and began their journey back to their neighborhood. Although Link,

Marth, and Pit felt that they had a descent time, Roy was the complete opposite. To him, running into Wolt and Lilina with his friends was like getting stabbed in the heart and having sizzling salt poured in the wound. No matter how rude they presented themselves and how disrespectful and arrogant their remarks were, his peers found them charming for a strange reason. It was like being ill-mannered was a sign of being dominant.

Unbeknownst to Roy, his day was about to get worse once when he stepped into his house.

Author's Notes: Yep, life can sometimes kick you in the rear when you're not expecting it.

OT: Here's chapter 8. Just a heads up, after one week, school's starting for me. So expect slower updates! Nooooo!

So, in the next chapter, we're finally going to see the person Eliwood was talking to on the phone! Also, just a warning, it does feature a pairing. So hopefully, it won't cause a large crudstorm between fans.

Story Questions:

What's your favorite ice cream?

Had you ever meet someone who disrespected people including you, yet they are seen as charming and amiable by others?

(You don't need to answer this.) Any suggestions on how Marth should recover his memories?

Chapter 9: Chapter 9

"Dad! We're home!" Roy called when he and Marth returned home. "Huh? What is this?"

Roy was greeted with a pile of cardboard boxes stacked on each other near the sofa. With a tiny growl, Roy viciously looked down at the ground. Oh no, *she* had to move in today. Why couldn't she arrive next year or better, never?

As Marth locked the door, Eliwood protruded his head out of the kitchen. "Oh, you two are just in time for dinner!" he said with a soft smile. "I didn't expect you two to arrive back so soon."

"Well, Link had to go home early." Roy explained. "We decided to come back with him."

"I see... Did you guys get anything to eat?" Eliwood asked.

"We just had ice cream." Roy simply answered. "That's all."

Eliwood slightly frowned. "That's not nutritious. It's all sugar. Join us for dinner!"

Roy's navy-blue eyes widened. "'Us'? What do you mean?"

"Lyn is here for dinner." Eliwood said.

"What?!" Roy exclaimed quietly.

"Please show some respect, ok?" Eliwood asked softly.

Roy paused for a moment. After sighing in defeat, he grumbled, "Fine..."

"Lighten that attitude." Eliwood sternly ordered, his voice slightly louder.

Roy glowered at Eliwood. "I will..." he mumbled.

One of Marth's brows lowered at the sight of Roy's snide, impolite remarks. Gee, what was with him? Yeah, Wolt and Lilina kinda ruined his day. But, Roy was not that angry! Was Roy secretly angry at Eliwood? It could not be! Eliwood was his father!

Marth followed Roy and Eliwood to the dinner table, and was a bit surprised. Sitting in the empty seat was a middle-aged woman patiently waiting for the three. She had long, forest-green hair tied in a ponytail, emerald eyes, and a busty chest that grabbed every men's attention. As soon as Marth looked at her, his curious eyes eventually wandered onto the two, protruding lumps on her chest. His face turning red, Marth quickly looked away. Yes, it was true that Marth did not know what a handgun was. However, he sensed that it was disrespectful to look at a woman like that.

"Eliwood, who's that?" Lyn asked.

"Oh, this is Marth." Eliwood introduced as he and the other males sat down. "He's staying with us for now."

"How come?" Lyn asked as she began to sip her soup.

"I found him injured on the beach last month." Eliwood explained. "Didn't I tell you?"

"I think I remember!" Lyn replied. "He lost his memories, didn't he?"

Before Eliwood could answer, Marth spoke up. "Y-Yeah, I kan't remember anyding." He sighed.

"That's too bad..." Lyn replied. "Do you remember anything yet?"

Marth nodded sadly before turning away. "N...No. I kan't remember... To b-be honest, I dunno how to wecover my memories!"

"Well, what do you like to do?" Lyn asked. "I heard that if you loose your memories and something seems very familiar and interesting, it might haves connection with your past!"

"I don't k-know about that..." Marth replied, looki down at his food. "So f-far, the only d-thing I like to do is shpend time with W-Woy."

"Please don't bring me into this stupid conversation." Roy thought to himself as he quickly ate his salad. He did not want

to be in this conversation at all.

"Hmmm, you like spending time with Roy?" Lyn asked, trying to think of something. "How come?"

"He's weally funny a-and caring!" Marth answered cheerfully.

"Hmmm, maybe Roy is starting to bond with Marth!" Eliwood thought to himself as he looked at Roy, who was paying no attention to him. The smaller redhead was drinking his water.

"Something tells me that you might have a brother or a sister." Lyn explained. "I don't know if it's true or not, though. That's just my opinion."

"Even though Woy's y-younger than me, he's like an o-older brother." Marth continued. "Something tells me that I h-have an o-older brother! But, I'm not g-getting anyding..."

"It takes time, Marth." Lyn smiled at the bluenette.

Marth nodded and continue to eat his dinner.

"So, did you manage get all your stuff?" Eliwood asked.

"I think I did." Lyn answered. "But, I would like to double check. Tomorrow, I'll be heading back to my old house to see if I need anything else."

"Do you need any help? I can drive there for you." Eliwood offered.

"No, it's find. You don't have to." Lyn replied. "I'll just return late."

"I heard that it's going to rain." Eliwood mentioned. "It might be dangerous for you to drive back!"

"Yeah, this is the same guy who drove out of the gas station with the gas pump nozzle still in his car." Lyn sarcastically teased.

"At least I didn't rear-end the same driver five times in a month!" Eliwood shot back mischievously.

"Fine, fine. I was a lousy driver! However, I at least managed to gain a friend, or I should say husband." Lyn responded with a smirk. "You on the other hand, only gained a large hole in your paycheck!"

While Eliwood and Lyn were repeatedly teasing each other, Marth noticed that Roy mysteriously vanished. Not interested in the adults' conversation, Marth quietly left the dining table and climbed up the stairs to Roy's room.

"Woy? Are you in here?" Marth asked as he opened the door. He was greeted by Roy lying in his bed, covered in his bed sheet.

Roy did not reply. He only gazed out the window sadly.

"Woy? Are you ok?" Marth asked again, approaching Roy.

"Leave me alone." Roy grouchily demanded.

Marth sat on the bed next to Roy. "W-W-Look. I'm here for you." he replied. "Pwease tell me w-why are you weally u-upset!"

"Promise me that you won't tell Lyn or Dad." Roy responded, turning to look at Marth.

Marth set his hand on his heart. "I pwomise."

Roy tossed the blanket off his body. "It's Lyn and my Dad that's bothering me."

Marth gasped softly. "W-Why?"

"You know my Mom, right?" Roy questioned before answering.

Marth thought for a few moments. "Well, I wemember that I was e-exploring y-your Dad's room." he began. "I found a picture of him, you, and y-you mom in a-a drawer. She has-sh red eyes and blue hair, w-wight?"

"Did Dad tell you why she isn't here?"

"She d-died of a-an illness last year. D-Didn't she?

Roy sighed miserably at the sad yet distant memory. "Well, after Mom died, my Dad met Lyn. After a while, they fell in love. I thought it was these lovely-dovely love like Wolt and Lilina, but it was actual love! I think two weeks ago, they officially married."

"Dat's a good thing, w-wight?" Marth questioned softly. "You h-have a new mom..."

"No, it w-wasn't!" Roy answered loudly.

"Why?"

Roy silenced for a moment.

"Woy?" Marth softly questioned.

"Their... Their relationship completely changed..." Roy paused, he was unable to hack and barf out the last, two words.

"Changed who?"

"...my dad." Roy finally finished.

"Wait, h-how?" Marth asked in bewilderment. "It k-k-can't be his personawity! He's weally nice!"

"To you and other people, except me." Roy bluntly answered.

"H-How?"

"I don't know what the hell's with him!" Roy sighed out loud. "Ever since he met Lyn, I've been really, REALLY DAMN ANGRY AT HIM!" he exclaimed.

Marth flinched; he hoped that Eliwood and Lyn could not hear him. Roy read Marth's alarmed expression and quickly calmed down.

"Everything was revolved around Lyn and other people!" Roy continued, hissing under his breath. "Every time when I want to do something with him, he either has a fucking date with Lyn, busy with work, or helping other people! Not only that, he started to forcing me to do well in fucking school! He'll be like, 'If you don't get a good grade in this stupid World History class, I'll ground your ass!'. I don't need to do well in History to get into a damn art school!"

Marth did not know how to respond to that long, furious statement. He could only look at Roy with large, shocked eyes.

"Just leave me alone, ok?" Roy ordered grumpily as he curled up in his bed. "Damn it..."

"Ok... I'll leave you alone..." Marth timidly said. He followed the redhead's order not because he was afraid, but because he wanted Roy to feel better.

Now that Roy was not by his side, Marth was left with nothing to do. Bored out of his mind, he went downstairs and spotted Lyn on the couch. She was editing some photos with Photoshop on her laptop.

"Lyn, w-w-what are you doing?" Marth asked, a sparkle of curiosity gleamed in his eyes.

"I'm trying to finish some work." Lyn answered. "In case you don't know, I'm kinda like an editor. I'm editing a few photos so they can be used for a magazine."

Marth looked at the photos and remarked, "T-They look weally good!"

"Thank you, Marth." Lyn smiled at the bluenette.

"So, w-what can dis program do?" Marth asked, looking at the art program.

"Besides doing impressive drawings, it can edit a picture." Lyn explained. "For example, it can change colors, add light or dark, and add or lessen colors."

"That's kool! Can you take a p-picture of me and c-c-change my hair red like Woy's?" Marth requested.

Lyn laughed. "Not now, I'm busy. Maybe next time, sorry."

Unbeknownst to the two, up the stairs from the corner, Roy was listening to their conversation. With a quiet, depressed sigh, Roy sat against the walls and miserably looked at the blank world. He began to feel the incredible power of the world turning against him.

That night after changing into his nightclothes, Marth went to the bathroom to brush his teeth and wash his face, only to discover that the door was locked. Who was using it? Maybe Roy? Twenty minutes ago, Marth spotted Roy entering the bathroom. But, why was it taking him so long? From what Marth gathered from his experience, it only took him at most five minutes.

Although it was not as sensitive as Link's pointy ears, Marth's round ears heard a series of soft, weak noises coming from behind the door. Wondering what it was, Marth set the side of his head on the door and tried to identify the noises.

It sounded like crying.

What was wrong with Roy? Why was he sad? Was it Eliwood and Lyn, like he mentioned earlier?

After a few seconds, the sobs finally ceased and Roy exited the bathroom. It took him a few moments to notice Marth, who closely gazed into his eyes, which were pink and puffy from weeping.

"Sorry for taking so long." he apologized as he quickly wiped away his tears.

"It's o-ok." Marth simply answered. He secretly wanted to ask Roy what was wrong. However, he kept his mouth shut. Marth did not know what to do to be honest.

Roy just nodded in reply and hurried to his room, shutting the door in the progress. Looking at the closed door for a split second, Marth hurried into the bathroom and hurriedly got ready for bed. He wanted to talk to Roy as soon as possible!

Lying in his bed, Roy was about to turn off the lights and begin his trip to the dream world when Marth suddenly swung the door open, slightly startling the redhead. Blinking rapidly in awkwardness, Marth's shoulders tensed a bit in shyness.

"Did... D-Did I suwpwise you?" he asked quietly.

"Kinda." Roy answered simply.

"Sorry." Marth softly said as he got into his sleeping bag.

"It's all right." Roy replied coolly. "Is it all right if we can sleep early tonight? I feel kinda tired."

"Okay." Marth answered.

After that sentence, the lights shut off, leaving the room in darkness. The only light that remained was the warm, orange hallway light creeping from the open door. With a small sigh, Marth shut his eyes and turned to face Roy, who was staring at the ceiling.

"Woy?" Marth asked.

"Yeah?" Roy responded.

"W-Which place do y-you wike the most in S-Smashburg?"

Roy thought for a while. "Well, it's the beach near the wharf. If I remember correctly, it's where Dad found you."

Marth gently hugged his blanket. "Why do you like it?"

"When I was little and Mom was still alive, we used to go there whenever Dad wasn't busy with work." Roy suddenly stopped at the sentence. Tears began to fill his eyes.

"Woy? Are you ok?" Marth opened his eyes and looked up at Roy.

"I'm ok." Roy quickly answered. "J-Just go back to sleep, ok?"

"You don't s-sound ok." Marth replied, not believing Roy's answer.

Roy buried his face into his blanket and tried to hold in his sobs. "It's nothing. I can deal with this by myself, ok?"

"If you s-say so..." Marth replied.

When Marth closed his eyes, he was greeted with the sound of quiet weeps of sorrow before he drifted to sleep. If he had not fallen asleep and stood up to look at Roy, he would have seen the redhead weeping softly yet hysterically to himself.

Author's Notes: That day escalated quickly...

Sorry for the late-ish update! I thought I finished this chapter, however I needed to add a few more parts! Right now, I'm trying to finish and upload as many chapters as I could before school starts, so you guys don't need to wait!

Story Questions:

If you can choose any natural hair color, what would you choose? (Personally, I would choose dark blue.)

If your father remarried due to a divorce, death, etc... would you accept it or despise it?

Why do you think Roy was crying in the bathroom by himself?

Chapter 10: Chapter 10

Although it was extremely sunny, bright, and blazing warm yesterday, the sun decided to take a day off. Hesitant and unwilling to replace the sun's shift, the gray, grumpy clouds were forced out of their domains and took the sun's place in the sky. Eventually, they were unable to hold their fury in, and released their anger and frustration in the form of rain.

The dark weather perfectly matched Roy's mood. Sitting on his bed, he blankly gazed out the window and watched water patter onto the streets and roll off the roof loudly. Marth was sitting on his sleeping bag, wondering what to do. It had been hours since breakfast and the two were left with nothing to do!

"Woy? What a-are gonna do now?" Marth asked.

"Nothing." Roy answered plainly. "Just nothing."

"But notding's boring!" Marth protested. "W-Why don't we shpend time wid P-Pit and the others?"

"I'll next Pit." Roy replied with a small, hopeful smile. "Thanks."

As Roy texted a message to Pit, Marth got up and began to wander around the room. He approached a small desk, which had cups of pencils, pens, and art supplies of all kinds. There were tubes of paint and markers of all colors. A tall, plastic ruler stood out from the forest of pigments.

What caught Marth's attention was a sketchbook with a colorful cover. It had a picture of a tall, cartoony tree with several animals living in it. Checking behind his back to see if Roy was not looking, Marth opened the book and began to quickly scan through it.

Marth was a bit amazed by its contents. Although some of the sketches were incomplete, a bit odd, not a hundred percent proportional, and somewhat messy, it clearly showed the artist's effort to create a perfect drawing.

Who was the artist? Marth checked all of the pages and failed to find a name. Yet, the book was in Roy's room... Could it be? Marth looked at Roy with the book in his hands.

"Pit said that he, Link, and Link's brothers went to the movies." Roy sighed, feeling left out. "His mom only gave him four tickets. So, we can't do come with them.

"Ok..." Marth softly said. "Woy, I h-have a question. Did y-you draw dese pictures?" he asked, giving Roy the book.

"Yeah, so what?" Roy carelessly replied. "Are you going to criticize it or laugh at it?"

"N-No!" Marth exclaimed in shock. "I d-t-think they are n-nice!"

"Well, thanks." Roy thanked.

"W-Why would I laugh or c-cwitisize it?" Marth asked.

"Because you either don't know how hard I worked on it, or just want to put someone down to make yourself look good." Roy answered.

"Hmmmm, I s-see..." Marth replied. His eyes lit up like a match. "Woy? I wanna draw l-like you!"

"What?! You do?" Roy responded, a bit overwhelmed.

"Yeah!" Marth replied with a small smile.

"Well, if you want to, we need to get you a sketchbook." Roy said. "I don't have a new one, so we need to go somewhere to get one."

"Why k-can't we just u-use blank paper?" Marth asked.

"Because paper is just inconvenient." Roy answered. "You can't carry it around without damage it."

"I see... Do you know w-where to get one?"

"I know an art store that is close to here." Roy took his wallet, which was sitting in a drawer and checked its contents. "Let's see... Twenty dollars! That should be enough! Let's go!"

After putting on their warm, protective jackets, the redhead and bluenette began their wet, cold journey to their destination. Shivering underneath their jackets, the two wearily looked around their surroundings before crossing the street. It was a bit slippery, and some drivers cared less about their and others safety. Due to the freezing weather, most of the everyday pedestrians either drove to their destination or stayed home, thus leaving the streets empty.

After traveling down the damp streets and walking through the rain, Marth and Roy finally at the art store. Once when they stepped in, Marth was amazed. Each of its aisles held different kinds of art supplies, such as paints, brushes, pencils, and pens. However, drawing supplies were not the only things the store had. There were fabrics, threads and needles for sewing; clay and plaster for pottery; and even wood for making birdhouses and other neat items!

"The sketchbooks should be here somewhere." Roy said as he guided Marth through the store. They went into an aisle. There, were many sketchbooks of all sizes, lengths, and kinds. "There!"

"Whoa, w-which one should I t-take?" Marth asked as he bewilderedly looked around.

"Any." Roy answered. "As long as you like it and it's under twenty dollars!"

"Ok!" Marth replied bubbly as he looked around for a good sketchbook.

"Take your time, ok?" Roy added.

After several minutes, Marth finally chose a spiral, average-sized notebooks. It was about twelve dollars, which did not leave a large dent on the hood of Roy's wallet. Once when they endured the pain and boredom of waiting in line, Roy finally paid the sketchbook, thus rightfully claiming it as Marth's.

"Well, we f-finally got it..." Marth told Roy as they exited the store. "W-What are we gonna do w-when we get home?"

"When we get home, I'm gonna teach you some techniques I use." Roy replied.

"I kan't w-wait!" Marth smiled cheerfully. Without even noticing on his own, he began to skip ahead of Roy.

"Hey Marth, slow down!" Roy exclaimed as he watched Marth dash around the corner.

There was a loud thud, a small cry from Marth, and a surprised, (disgustingly) familiar yell. Roy quickly hurried to Marth, hoping that nobody got hurt. Marth was on the ground, rubbing his aching shoulder and in front of a certain couple.

"Marth, are you ok?" Roy asked, helping the bluenette up.

"Oh, it's you two." Wolt spoke, looking at Roy with a gleam of smugness. Lilina was by her lover's side, whose arm was lovingly on her shoulders. It seemed like it never moved from its spot. A bit quiet, she just gazed blankly at the two older teens.

"Yeah, it's us." Roy replied. "So what? C'mon Marth, let's go."

"Y-Yes." Marth replied. He began to follow Roy, who attempted to work around the two.

As Marth walked around Wolt and Lilina, Wolt noticed the ordinary, average sketchbook that was embraced tightly in his arms. Without a word, he abruptly snatched the book from Marth's arms and looked at it.

"What is this?" Wolt asked teasingly. "A sketchbook?"

"G-Give it back!" Marth exclaimed, grabbing the sketchbook and trying to tug it from the green-haired male's grasp.

"Let go, Wolt!" Roy ordered, his eyes widening in fury.

"I never knew that Marth liked to draw..." Lilina spoke softly.

"Really?" Wolt asked out loud. He slapped Marth's hands off the book and looked at it. "I wonder if he's a good artist... Can he even draw?"

"Look, I'm going to teach Marth how to draw." Roy retorted, trying to defend Marth. "Eventually, he'll be a great artist unlike you."

That statement lit the fuse in Wolt's heart. Without warning, he tossed the sketchbook at Roy's feet and stepped on it with his wet, dirty shoes. Marth immediately pulled Wolt away and quickly picked up the dirtied book as he cried out, "S-Stop it! Y-you're dirtying it!"

"Let's go, Lilina." Wolt spoke as he guided her away. Before leaving, however, he said to Marth, "Gee, Marth. If you really want to learn how to draw, you should ask me for tips, not Roy."

Blinking away tiny tears of pain, Marth wiped the dirty, gray water off the cover of his sketchbook. "Wow, he's sho m-mean..." he said as he turned to Roy. His cerulean eyes widened slightly in worry. "Woy? What's w-wrong?"

Roy did not reply at first. He just looked down in despite and hopelessness at the soaked sidewalk.

"Woy?" Marth repeatedly softly.

"Let's go, Marth." Roy finally said. With that, he turned and began to head back home. Marth quietly hurried after him.

When the two finally arrived at their home, the rain was pouring violently to the point that if it weren't for the asphalt ground, the excess water would have completely flooded the streets. The angry, gray clouds' frustrated mood did not improve for the best. Completely enraged at the entire world, they turned into a dark, depressed black and continued to pour their outrage onto the world below.

After entering their warm, dry house, the two boys hung their jackets and began to watch the TV. Much to their dismay, there was nothing interesting to watch about. The only things that were aired were random, boring documentaries, golf games, new channels that told nothing but bad news, and random cartoons. Eventually, Marth and Roy settled on the cartoons. Unlike the other opinions, cartoons were easier to comprehend.

"Woy? A-Are you still gonna t-teach me how to d-draw?" Marth asked in a small voice.

"I... I don't feel like it anymore." Roy bluntly said.

With a sad sigh, Marth looked at his sketchbook— battered and dirtied on the cover, sitting on the coach to his right.

It was nine o' clock at nighttime when Eliwood and Lyn finally came back home. As their car pulled up the driveway, Marth, who was bored and blankly gazing at the TV, snapped out of daze and excitedly looked at the door.

"Woy, your d-dad and s-stepmom is back!" he happily said as he quickly got up and hurried to the door.

Roy just shrugged his arms and continued to watch the television. With a confused expression on his face, Marth went outside and greeted Eliwood and Lyn. It was still raining as hard as when he and Roy arrived home. When Marth finally reached the two, he was drenched in freezing water from head to toe.

"Hi, Mr. Eliwood and Mrs. Lyn! Do you need help?" Marth asked when he approached the two.

"No, we don't." Eliwood said as he locked the door. "Lyn did not bring back a lot of stuff."

Lyn, who was carrying a small box, hurried into the house for shelter from the rain. "Why are you guys standing out here?" she called. "It's really cold and wet outside! Come inside!"

"We better listen to Lyn." Eliwood told Marth, who quickly followed him inside.

When the two finally came inside, the first Eliwood noticed was Roy sitting on the coach, lazily watching TV. He did not look behind him nor make any movement that indicated he knew that visitors arrived into his home. It was nearly like if he was hypnotized by the glowing television.

"Here, Marth." Lyn said as she began to dry Marth's soaked, dark hair, which was a midnight blue color. Marth shivered a bit as water droplets landed on his exposed skin, which included his neck, face, feet, and hands. "Now, change into,some dry clothes, ok?"

Marth trembled a bit from the cold. "Y-Yes." he shakily said as he went upstairs to change into his pajamas.

Lyn smiled at the bluenette and entered the kitchen to do some cleaning up.

While this was happening, Elwiood approached Roy and softly said, "Roy, we're back."

"Oh, ok." Roy carelessly said, not bothering to look at his own father.

Eliwood was slightly miffed by Roy's attitude. "Roy, look at me." he sternly ordered.

Roy ignored his father and continued to stare at the TV, pretending that he did not hear him.

"Look at me." Eliwood repeated, his voice rising along with his boiling blood pressure and frustration.

Roy continued to ignore Eliwood. Unable to hold in his fiery temper, which was locked in a cage for long, tiring months, Eliwood suddenly exclaimed angrily, "Don't you understand English!? I said, LOOK AT ME!"

Without warning Eliwood suddenly snatched the remote control off the coffee table, turned off the TV via pressing the off button, and threw it onto the coach next to Roy. Roy, who was also caging the very same, blazing temper in, finally unleashed it in his fury. "Fine, I'm looking at you! I understand fucking English! The hell do you want from me?!" he shouted back.

"Why are you acting this way?!" Eliwood asked. His soft, gentle voice suddenly evolved into a monstrous, merciless yell.

"Oh, maybe I don't want to see you and Lyn again, dammit!" Roy answered quite loudly in a mocking tone of voice.

"Don't tell me that it's about our marriage again!" Eliwood shouted loudly in frustration. He was losing patience with his biological son. "I'm going to repeat once again, I love Lyn and Lyn loves me back! You don't have to worry!"

"What about Mom?! Did you fucking already forget about her? Gee, you replaced a woman who chased you for fucking long years since you were in college for a strange bitch who happened to bump into your car many times! She must be a stalker!"

"She's a coworker, not a stalker Roy! Also, watch your language! What happened to the Roy I knew before your mother passed away?!"

"What happened to the dad I *had* before he turned into a jerk after Mom died?!"

As the argument began to linger on, unbeknownst to the two furious redheads, Lyn and Marth were watching and listening to the violent, loud scene. While Lyn was trying to stay calm and wondering if she should try to stop the argument, Marth was sitting at the top of the stairs, his eyes shut tight in fright. He was tightly covering his ears in a vain attempt to block the angry shouts and protests.

"Don't speak to your own father like that!" Eliwood fiercely scolded.

"Why do you always want me to be like you?!" Roy suddenly asked, completely changing the subject. Tears began to fill his wide, enraged eyes. Heat began to boil in his forehead. "You always tell me, 'Roy, don't freakin' do this! Roy, do this instead!'"

"I want you to be successful!" Eliwood argued back. "Jobs aren't going to hire a young man with a mouth like that!"

"I can't believe jobs hired someone like you!" Roy protested, unable to control the hurtful words that flew out of his mouth like bullets. "In fact, I can't believe that someone like Mom fell in love with you, married you, and slept—!"

Before Roy could finish his malicious sentence, Eliwood's right palm shot out and struck his own son's face. The sound of a slap followed by Roy's high-pitched, pained cry echoed throughout the room. As Roy began to rub the blistering pain on his face, Eliwood blurted out, "If you love your mother that much, then why don't you build a time machine, go back in time, and prevent your own birth?! If it weren't for you weakening your own mother during childbirth, she would still be standing here today!"

There was a moment of dead silence after when the harmful, insulting sentence was yelled. Noticing tears of sorrow and hurt beginning to roll down Roy's face and his lower lip quivering, Eliwood quickly said, "Wait, Roy. I didn't mean it!"

It was too late, as words could never be taken back. His whimpers turning into hysterical sobbing, Roy hurriedly got off the sofa and rushed up the stairs.

"Roy, wait!" Eliwood exclaimed as he chased after his son. He and Roy zipped passed Marth, who could only helplessly watch in shock.

"Just leave me alone!" Roy exclaimed back as he shot into his room and slammed the door shut, locking it before tossing himself onto his bed.

"Roy, please." Eliwood begged as he tried to open the door. He gently knocked on the door. When he did not get a response, he set the side of his head against the wooden barrier and listened to Roy's uncontrollable sobs. "Roy." Eliwood repeated, hoping to get a response. Roy's response was his hysterical crying.

Eliwood's attention was so focused on the door, he did not hear Lyn coming up the stairs. He slightly jumped in surprise

when he felt her hands softly set on his shoulders. Turning around, Eliwood looked into Lyn's emerald eyes, which were not filled with disgust, but worry and concern.

"Lyn, I—" Eliwood started. "I'm sorry, I accidentally—!"

"It's ok, Eliwood." Lyn interrupted, trying to reassure her husband. "We all say something harmful when we're angry."

Eliwood nodded in understanding and agreement.

"I think Roy needs some time alone to calm down." Lyn added.

"I understand." Eliwood responded. He motioned to Lyn to follow him. "Let's go."

As Eliwood and Lyn went downstairs, Marth approached the door and looked at it for a few moments, before gently knocking on it.

"Woy?" Marth asked softly as he knocked the wooden surface. "W-Woy?"

Earning no response from the anguished, younger male, Marth knocked the door a few more times before giving up. With a small yet miserable sigh and tears glittering in his eyes, Marth sat against the wall opposite of the door and looked at it, waiting for Roy to open it.

Author's Notes: Gee, I really made most of the characters look like jerks, did I?

Here's chapter 10! Hopefully, I didn't scare away the readers with the negativity of the story! Sadly, that is kinda the theme of the story. Kinda.

Just another heads up that school is starting for me next week, so don't be surprised by the slow updates! Also, the story that I'm going to start next is about Ike and little Marth! (The one when Zelda accidentally turns Marth into a toddler.)

Story Questions:

Why do you think people put others down?

Had you ever blurted out something hurtful during an argument?

What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter?

Chapter 11: Chapter 11

Note: There's a triggering moment in this chapter. There's a warning before the part.

His eyes stinging and pink and his nose clogged with snot, Roy groggily opened his eyes as reality pulled him out of his dreamless sleep. Sniffing and rubbing his dry eyes, he looked at the clock on his nightstand, which read 4:30 AM.

Roy clumsily sat up and looked out the window. It was still raining violently. Raindrops of all sizes rapidly plunged from the angered clouds to the earth, who was facing their wrath. The windows of the neighboring homes were dead black, indicating that everyone was still asleep.

Roy trembled slightly in pain as he remembered the screaming, livid argument he had with his father. Although it happened hours ago, to Roy it felt like it was only several, short moments. He still felt the stabs and bruises ache and sting in his heart, which turned and twisted violently in his burning chest. His stomach flip-flopped as he remembered the fuming details of the argument.

Swallowing nervously, Roy hugged himself as thoughts raced through his mind. He could not take the pain anymore. He was too tired to continue through the trail. However, no wonder how hard he wished, he could not forfeit the journey. He had to finish it, no matter what. It was required for a living thing like him.

But, he could always take a shortcut, which had no obstacles and fear. But, he might regret taking the shortcut later! However, the other alternative was to face his troubles and the dangerous obstacles that sat in the way. He might get caught in one of its traps, getting hurt in the progress!

After a short while, Roy made his choice. He decided to take the short cut.

When Roy carefully opened the door, the first thing he saw was Marth sitting against the wall asleep. Roy quietly stepped out of his room and looked at him. Marth was probably waiting for him to come out. Instead of waking the bluenette up however, Roy just smiled slightly and silently walked away.

Hoping not to wake them, Roy snuck into his parents' bedroom. He found them sleeping together in bed. Both of them embraced their partner protectively, vowing to stay together until the end. The only sound he heard were their gentle breathing.

Sure that Eliwood and Lyn were in deep sleep, Roy stealthily crept towards the drawers, carefully opened it in order to not wake them, and took a certain box and a weapon. Looking at his parents once more, he hurried out of the room, knowing that it would be the last time he would see them.

Marth was awoken by the sound of soft footsteps walking down the hallway. With a tired yawn, he rubbed his eyes and looked at the shadowy figure, trying to identify it. It was a bit hard to see through the darkness with sleepy, cerulean eyes.

"W-Who is this?" Marth asked quietly.

"Marth? It's me, Eliwood." Eliwood answered as he went towards the bluenette.

Marth got off the ground and stretched. His joints painfully cracked; Marth did not have a comfortable sleep. It was more comfortable to sleep in a sleeping bag than against the wall.

"Why are you here?" Eliwood asked.

"I was waiting f-for Woy..." Marth softly answered. He pointed to the door and stated, "He l-locked the door."

"Oh, I remember." Eliwood replied, suddenly feeling guilty. He looked away, hoping not to make eye contact with Marth.

"Mr. E-Eliwood?" Marth quietly spoke up with wide eyes. "What's wrong?"

"It's... It's the argument I had with Roy." Eliwood answered, not afraid to conceal his feelings. "I feel that I've been too harsh on him..."

"I k-kinda agree." Marth admitted. "

"I've been too hard on him..." Eliwood continued regretfully. "Instead of forcing him out of his depression quickly, I should've supported him along the way..."

"Depression? What do you mean?" Marth blinked.

"After when my wife passed away, Roy was diagnosed with depression, a mental state of hopelessness." Eliwood explained. "Although pills were prescribed for him, they did not help much, due to stress from school. Also, Roy's depression made an impact on his schoolwork, social life, and personality. He had a hard time making friends and motivating himself to do well. This resulted in him having a withdrawn, lonely personality."

"Why d-did you push him?" Marth asked.

"I just wanted my son back." Eliwood answered, tears filling his eyes. "I wanted to pull him out of his depression, so our life could be the same again! I also wanted to remarry, so Roy could have a mother. I felt that Lyn was a perfect match."

"I t-think you should've just encouraged h-him." Marth responded. "He t-t-told me that you changed a lot after when N-Ninian died."

"How?" Eliwood asked. This was something new.

Marth's shoulders pulled up in shyness. "Well, W-Woy told me dat y-you hardly paid attention to him and you o-only cared about others a-and your j-job. Also, he m-mentioned that you w-were pushing him too hard..."

Eliwood looked at the ground. "I knew it..." he said quietly."I was being selfish..."

"You're n-not shellfish!" Marth protested calmly. "Y-You were just trying to b-bring Woy back!"

"No, Marth. I was being selfish." Eliwood admitted sternly. "I need to admit it to Roy."

"Do y-you think Woy's going to understand?" Marth asked softly.

Eliwood went towards the shut door, which led to Roy's room. "I hope so." He gently knocked on the door, hoping that Roy was not going to crankily shut him out. "R...Roy?"

There was no response. Eliwood knocked harder on the wooden surface. "Roy?" he spoke louder.

Silence.

"M-Maybe he's still asleep..." Marth spoke uneasily, sensing for the worse.

"Is the door still locked?" Eliwood asked, taking the doorknob and turning it. "No, it isn't."

Eliwood quietly opened the door and entered Roy's room, which was nearly as dark as the room itself. "Roy? I need to talk to you." he said, as he turned on the light.

As the light splashed the shady room with color, Eliwood looked at the bed for his son. Instead of seeing his son drowsily and grumpily waking up and rubbing his eyes, all he saw was a blanket untidily spread open on the bed with not sign of the younger redhead. Worry began to turn in Eliwood's stomach. Where was his son? Could he...?

"Roy?" Eliwood called louder, his voice shaking with nervousness. "Come out! Please!"

Marth sensed that something terrible happened to Roy. As Eliwood began to worriedly look for Roy on the second floor, Marth hurried down the stairs. He turned on the lights and panicky glanced around for any signs of the redhead.

"W-o-o-o-o-o-y!" Marth exclaimed loudly. He looked in the kitchen and saw no one. "Where are you?"

The lights in the master bedroom flashed on as Lyn hurried to Eliwood, awoken by the alarmed shouts for Eliwood. She gently set her hands in Eliwood's and asked, "What's wrong? Is it Roy?"

Trying to stay calm, yet panicking wildly in their, Eliwood set his shaky hands on Lyn's shoulders. "We can't find Roy anywhere!"

Lyn gasped. "What should we do! Call the police?"

"I don't think so." Eliwood answered unsurely. "Maybe we should ask the neighbors if they saw him!"

"But everyone is asleep! They couldn't have seen him!"

While Eliwood and Lyn were discussing what to do next and how they were going to find Roy, they did not notice Marth

walking up the stairs. Listening to the grown-ups' tense conversation, Marth wondered why did Roy runaway. What happened? Was he that upset? Also, where could he be now? He can't be at the pizza joint or the arcade now! These places were closed.

"I can't think." Marth thought to himself. *"Mr. Eliwood and Mrs. Lyn are talking too loud. Maybe it's quieter in their bedroom."*

Marth decided to go into the master bedroom. As he entered the room, he noticed that the drawer containing the handgun, bullets, and picture was slightly open. His heart pounding in alarm, Marth unsteadily opened it. Please be in here... Please be in here... Please be in here...!

"No..." Marth thought to himself in panic. Both the gun and the box of bullets were gone!

Without thinking twice, Marth sped pass Eliwood and Lyn, who were still debating on what to do, hurried down the stairs, quickly put on his jacket, and rushed out the door, accidentally leaving it open in his hurry. Although he was a naive, ignorant young man with a brain that consisted little of how the world worked, he knew that a handgun could hurt people, including Roy himself.

With Roy in his thoughts, Marth hurried down the wet streets, sensing where Roy could be. He did not care if the freezing rain poured down on his body. The only thing he cared about was saving Roy.

(A/N: Trigger warning!)

When Roy was little, his parents would take him to the beach when his father was off from work. The sandy land would have lots of people walking along the shores with their loved ones, making sandcastles, and collecting a few stones and seashells that washed up. The sky would be a perfect, clear blue and the sun would be out, chasing away the gloominess.

However, everything was completely gone now.

The sky was now a lifeless, dark black with anguished clouds covering the sun and pouring their despair onto the drenched land. There were hardly any people, as they were wise enough to stay inside, where it is warm, cozy, and dry. The only person who was on the lonely, dark beach was Roy.

Roy was sitting on the soaked, gritty sand. As the rain drenched his soaked, shivering body, he nervously gazed at the handgun that sat in his shaking hands. He was unsure if he should so this... Although some said death itself was one of the most relieving experiences in life, it could also be one of the most horrifying moments in life.

Roy was beginning to have second thoughts. Maybe he should not do this! He could bear with his new family and adapt to it! Also, Pit was his only friend! Like him, Pit had a little trouble fitting in! Not only that, Marth needed him as a guidance! He never showed him how to draw!

But, what if his new family did not accept him? What if his father never changed at all? He always wanted him to be better! Pit would not be lonely without him; he had Link! He choice him and his brothers over Roy for the movies! Marth did not always need him! Although he dreaded the green-haired male, Roy figured that Marth could always ask for Wolt for help on drawing.

Figuring that he finally made his precious decision, Roy anxiously took a single, small yet fetal bullet from its box and put it in the gun. After loading it, he set the deadly weapon's barrel against the side on his head.

This was finally it.

Clutching his navy-blue eyes shut, Roy set his finger on the trigger.

He was finally free.

"W-o-o-o-y!" Just as when Roy was about to pull the trigger, he heard Marth calling his name from the distance. He set down the gun, looked behind him, and saw Marth hurrying through the thick, damp sand towards him. His cerulean eyes were not only full of fear, but also worry.

"Marth?!" Roy asked in jolt. "Why are you here?!"

Marth did not answer Roy's question. Instead, he quickly took off his wet jacket and put it on the smaller redhead. "Woy, you're s-so kold..." Marth said nervously as he zipped the jacket for Roy. "There..."

"Marth, I don't need it." Roy protested again. "Why are you—?"

Roy never got to finish his question, as Marth wrapped his arms around him and pulled him into a tight yet warm embrace.

"Woy... Don't go..." Marth quietly sniffed. Tears began to fill his eyes.

"What did you say?" Roy could not hear due to the pattering sound of the rain.

"DON'T GO!" Marth suddenly exclaimed, as ears began to roll down his face.

"But Marth, I—!"

Marth hugged Roy tighter. "I don't w-want you to g-go!" he continued loudly. "If y-you die, then y-you'll leave me, your dad, W-Lyn, Pit, L-Link, everyone!"

Roy huffed loudly. "Nobody needs me, ok? It's better off if I'm dead, ok?"

"NOOO!" Marth argued. "That's not true!"

"Why?"

"It's because, I need you. Everyone y-you know n-needs you." Marth answered shakily.

Roy was bewildered at the sentence. He could not reply to Marth's answer.

"Woy? R-Remember when your m-mom died?" Marth continued. "Didn't you f-feel sad? D-Do you want all o-of us to feel like dat?"

"I... No, I don't." Roy answered, slightly bewildered. He did not think of that at all!

"...I'm sorry." Marth softly said.

"Wait, what are you sorry for?" Roy asked. He was now confused.

"I t-thought that I needed y-you more than anyone else!" Marth explained, burying his face into Roy's slim shoulder. "But, it t-turns out that you n-need me more!"

"M...Marth..." Roy said, as he set his head on Marth's larger shoulder and gently closed his eyes.

"There you guys are!"

Marth and Roy released each other from embrace and looked at the source of the voice. There, Eliwood hurried towards them, an umbrella in his hands. His face was a bit pale from panic.

When Eliwood stopped at the two, he sternly scolded, "Marth and Roy, never run off like that again, understand?! Something dangerous could happen!"

His navy-blue orbs then noticed the open box of bullets and the handgun next to Roy.

"Roy, don't tell me that you were—!" Eiwood started, terribly shocked at what his own son attempted.

"Dad, I... I... I...!" Roy shakily started, not knowing what to say.

Eliwood kneeled down and motioned Roy to come to him. "Roy, come here. Don't ask why, just come." he ordered, still feeling a bit uneasy.

Roy nodded and went to his father, who suddenly wrapped his arms around his son, pulled him towards his chest, and tightly embraced the smaller male. Suddenly finding himself in his father's arms, Roy flinched and went tense. When was the last time he was embraced from his own father? About a year, Roy supposed.

"Roy, I'm sorry for being selfish." Eliwood spoke to him. He felt Roy shivering slightly and hugged him harder to protect him from the cold. "Please understand, I just wanted you back. I just wanted the Roy Pherae I knew and loved back. But, I was so focused on trying to bring him back, I didn't notice that I was pressuring him. Please forgive me, Roy."

"Dad..." Roy could only reply softly. He began to relax in Eliwood's arms. "No, Dad I should be the one who's sorry. I was being a self-absorbed antisocial! You were only trying to help! I should've...accepted the changes in our family. I

should've noticed that you were only trying to make me a better person!"

"Roy..." Eliwood responded quietly.

"Erm, I t-think both of you are... Uh, how should I-I shay this...?" Marth spoke up awkwardly.

"...Equally guilty." Eliwood answered for the bluenette with a small smile, before turning to Roy, who was still in his arms. "Roy, don't think about what I said about your birth."

"You mean, the time-traveling thing?" Roy asked with wide eyes. His throat began to twist as he remembered the argument. Roy blinked his small tears away.

"No matter what the circumstances, I unconditionally love you." Eliwood continued. "You are part of both your mother's and my blood."

Roy tried to hold in his tears. "D-D-Dad? Do you think t-t-that Mom hates me because I-I gave her cancer after w-when I was born?" he unsteadily asked.

"No, you didn't!" Eliwood squeezed his son gently. "We discovered that she had cancer after when you were born! It wasn't your fault!"

"Still, if I hadn't been born, both of you wouldn't have known!" Roy included, his voice shaking like a tiny earthquake. Tears began to trickle down his face, as he was unable to hold it back.

"Sooner or later, we will eventually learn." Eliwood calmly answered. "It's something we can't evade. Do you understand?"

Roy nodded. "Mmmm hmmm."

"Even though I'm married to Lyn, that does not mean that forgot about your mother." Eliwood concluded. "I will always love her, even if she isn't here with me."

Roy nodded again, his tears blurring his vision.

"You are your mother's irreplaceable gift to me." Eliwood answered, giving Roy a truthful, loving, warm smile. "I would never forgive myself if I ever lose you."

"D...Dad..." Roy could only weakly say. Tears began to roll down his face. Unable to hide his true feelings, Roy buried his face into Eliwood's shoulder and began to sob hysterically. "D-a-a-a-a-a-a-d!"

"Woy, d-don't cry!" Marth exclaimed softly. He scooted towards the two redheads. Eliwood allowed Marth to join the embrace. "Pwease..."

"Shhh, it's ok." Eliwood whispered soothingly into his crying son's ears. "Daddy's here now. Shh..."

"...Daddy..." Roy sobbed into Eliwood's shoulder.

Eliwood hugged both Roy and Marth tighter and began to stroke Roy's cardinal hair.

By the time Roy finally calmed down, ten minutes had passed. It was near five in the morning, and the sun was beginning to rise towards the sky. The gold, bright light struck the clouds, chasing the darkness away and created a blast of colors in the sky. Seemingly cheered by the colors, the clouds began to drift away along with its misery the rain.

Roy sniffed loudly and wiped the tears out of his eyes as both Eliwood and Marth released him from their embrace.

"Do you feel better, Roy?" Eliwood asked with a hopeful smile.

Roy nodded with a tired smile and shivered a bit. "Y...Yes."

Eliwood gave Roy a small pat on the back and looked at Marth. "Let's get you two back inside. It's a bit cold here."

(A/N: End of trigger)

Once when they finally arrived back home, Roy and Marth were immediately changed into dry, warm clothes and wrapped in fuzzy, comforting blankets. While the two teens were watching TV, Lyn approached them with two cups of hot

tea.

"Well, we don't hot chocolate." she told them as she set the cups on the coffee table. "Tea is what we have left."

"It's okay! T-T-Thank you!" Marth thanked with a huge smile as he took a cup and sipped its warm contents. Swallowing the tasteless liquid, he stuck out his tongue in disgust. "Bleh, no taste..."

Roy unsurely took the second cup and shyly said, "Thank you...M... I'm not sure if I should say it..."

"Go on! Say it!" Marth encouraged with a large grin.

Swallowing his nervousness, Roy looked at Lyn directly in the eyes and said, "Thank you, M...Mom."

Lyn smiled lovingly at her stepson and playfully ruffled his hair. "You're welcome, Roy."

Meanwhile, a suspicious, black car was parked near Ike's home behind the tall shrubs that separated his front yard from his neighbor's. Seated in the vehicle were two mean dressed in black. Their eyes glared at the front door, as they were patiently waiting for someone to come out.

"He should be living here." one of the men said.

The other man nodded and continued to gaze at the door.

Finally, the person they were waiting for opened the door. Not aware about the strangers sneakily peering at him from the corner, Ike stepped out of the house and went to the driveway. There, was the daily paper.

As he bent down and picked up the roll of newspaper, Ike noticed a black car at the corner of his yard. Sensing something ominous, he carefully crept closer to the car, so he could see its passengers. This could not be good... He never saw this car in his neighborhood. Maybe his next-door neighbor brought a new car?

"Shit!" Ike thought to himself in alarm when he recognized the men. *"They're here to get me!"*

Without wasting single second and asking questions, Ike hurried back into his home, slamed the door shut, and quickly locked the door. He was now restless, as *they* now know where he lived.

"Ike? What happened?" Mist asked as she went down the stairs. There, she found Ike curled in a protective ball in front of the door, cowering fearfully and trembling wildly. "What's wrong?"

Looking at his younger sister, Ike frightfully said, "They're here to get me... They know where I am..."

Author's Notes: Cliffhanger? *gets hit in face with tennis balls*

Well, I forgot to mention that there's a triggering moment in the last chapter, so I quickly squeezed it in. For those who skipped the part due to it being too traumatizing, Roy just attempted suicide and Marth save him. Then Eliwood comforts him. I think this scene isn't too mature, so I'll leave it at T for now.

Just to let you know, school started for me, so updates are going to be slow! Also, I'm taking three advanced placement classes, so I might be too busy with work!

Story Questions:

Do you think Roy's going to have a stronger bond with his family?

Why do you think the men want Ike?

Chapter 12: Chapter 12

Chapter 13: Chapter 13

"All right, Marth, today you're going to serve the pizza to our customers. Ya got that?" Dedede the joint's manager spoke.

Marth, who was toying around with the dark fabric of his jet-black dress shirt, jumped in alertness and replied nervously, "Y-Yes!"

"And Link, you are going to help Zelda, one of your workers, make some pizza, got it?" Dedede asked Link, who was paying full attention.

"Understand!" Link answered with a small nod.

Before he turned back to his office, Dedede sternly said, "If any of you messes up, your paycheck will be lowered, you understand? I don't wanna here any whinin'."

"We understand." Link and Marth said at the same time.

With a glare at his two, new rookies, Dedede went back into his office. Marth's face turned pink and he looked down at the ground, away from Link. Gee, Dedede did not seem friendly. He was a bit spoiled for a manager. How did he get the job?

"Well, let's get started!" Link said to Marth, giving him a small nudge on his shoulder. "We won't get anythin' done if we just stand 'ere."

"Oh! Ok!" Marth exclaimed softly, snapping out his daze.

Link smiled at the bluenette as the two went to the kitchen. "No daydreamin', ok Marth? We don't want to have any sort of accidents today!"

"Y-Yes!"

As he and Link entered the kitchen, Marth noticed Ike at the counter, taking an order for a customer. Instead of being irritated and impatient with his patron, Ike seemed to calmly take his orders and even act a bit friendly. Admittedly, this somewhat convinced Marth to go up to him and greet him. However... Marth jumped slightly and went closer to Link in protection. What if Ike suddenly fired his fury at him? Marth just tried to ignore Ike and looked ahead of Link, avoiding the bait and its trap.

The kitchen would have been larger if two large ovens and a large counter were not taking up room. Piles of pale, white, soft dough sat in a large, distorted heap on the countertop. Small, colorful plastic containers held different, raw toppings, such as spicy pepperoni; tiny, black olives; small, brown meatballs; and shredded mozzarella cheese. A small yet powerful smell caught Marth's and Link's noses, making them sniff the air for the source of the smell like a hungry Arcanine. They eventually discovered that the scent came from the cube-shaped ovens. The ovens, hardworking machines that were busily cooking pizza, emitted a powerful blast of warmth that caused Marth to slowly sweat through his shirt, much to the bluenette's embarrassment.

The first thing Link noticed was the same brunette, Hylian waitress busily loading a large, raw pizza into the oven. After slamming its door shut, she looked up and noticed the two males in the kitchen. As anxiety struck her heart, she tried to keep a stone-hard, straight facial expression. Oh gods, there are two boys in the same room! But, do not worry! She was in public! If anything happened, she should just call for help!

"Er, are you guys new here?" she asked, trying to hide her nervousness.

"Yep, we are!" Link answered with a friendly smile. "I'm Link, and this is my friend Marth!" Link gestured to Marth, who was shyly forcing a small, coy smile. "Are you Zelda, the worker Dedede was talkin' about?"

"Yes, I am." Zelda replied quickly, hoping to end the conversation. "I overheard the conversation. You're going to work with me, while Marth's going to serve. Am I right?"

"You got 'em right!" Link replied. "So, what are we supposed to do?"

"Well," Zelda started. She nervously looked around. "Marth, when a pizza is done, just put it on a tray, or in a box. Just let me know if it's ready, understand?"

"Yes!" Marth answered with a small nod.

"Link, you're going to help me make pizza." Zelda explained to Link. "Ike is going to give us an order on paper." She pointed to a small, open window. Sitting on a still, was a nail-like object producing through four pieces of paper with either a red or green mark. "We have to add the ingredients and cook the pizza as quick as possible."

"I understand." Link said. "Let's get started, okay?"

With that, the three began their work. As Marth waited quietly near the oven, Zelda and Link began to create the pizzas. While Zelda was kneeing the dough, Link reached over for the pizza sauce. The slow, careful movement of his hand strangely made Zelda flinch.

"Are you ok?" Link asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Y-Yeah, I'm ok." Zelda uneasily answered, giving a quick glance at Link.

"Are you sure?" Link carefully asked again. "You look a bit pale there."

"Really, I'm ok." Zelda repeated with a small sigh.

Link shrugged his arms before turning back to his business. "If ya say so."

Making sure that Zelda was not noticing him, Link quietly watched her diligently work with large, azure eyes. To him, she was one of the most beautiful girls he had ever seen. Her brunette hair resembled chocolate, her skin was slightly tanned, and her eyes were a calm midnight blue. And she seemed proper and well-mannered, not snarky and snobby.

"Zelda?" Marth quietly asked the brunette Hylian. "The pizza is ready. What do you want me to do?"

Zelda forced a small smile. "Oh, let me show you."

At that moment, Link snapped out of his daydream and carefully watched Zelda. He saw her take a note with a red mark and tell Marth that notes with a red mark was a take out. Marth nodded bubbly in understanding and smiled cheerfully at Zelda.

Although Marth did not notice, Link sensed that Zelda was dreadfully terrified of them. She seemed uneasy whenever she made contact, whether socially or physically, with the two males. Did she have a phobia of men? If so, what was the cause? Link peered over at Ike, who was taking an order from the phone. Maybe she got into a conflict with Ike!

"No, it can't be." Link thought to himself, keeping an on the bluenette. "Ike's been workin' here since summer from what I heard from the others."

Link wanted Zelda to feel comfortable around him and Marth. As soon as Zelda finished her explanation to Marth and went back to her work, Link slowly approached her, so he would not frighten hear. He hated to inflict pain, whether physically or mentally, onto another living thing. Although many people considered pain and fear to be two separate things, Link viewed these two entirely unrelated emotions as one, large thing. Both of them could be inflicted by anything and cussed suffering and pain to the victim.

"Hey Zelda," Link started, immediately grabbing the brunette's attention. "do you want me to work over 'ere?" He motioned to the empty space on the counter.

"Why do you ask?" Zelda questioned doubtfully.

"Well, you seem to be kinda nervous around Marth and me." Link explained, trying to ease Zelda. He could already sense her distrust. "I want to make you as comfortable as possible, ok?"

"You can be close to me." Zelda's voice faltered as she failed to hide her anxiety. Just speaking to a male was nerve-wrecking for her. "Just ignore me, understand?"

"Look, if you're not comfortable, you won't work well." Link tried to reassure, his voice sounding stern. "I don't want to see you get into trouble, you got that?"

"Ok..." Zelda sighed. "To be honest... Well... Is it ok if you can, be like, over there?"

"Here?" Link went a few steps back and set his hand on the counter.

"Yes, that's fine." Zelda answered with a small smile, which did not seem forced. "Thank you... Um..."

"Link." Link reminded with a trusting smile. "The name is Link."

"Oh! Thank you Link!" Zelda thanked.

"If you need anything, just let me know!" Link added before starting work.

As Link and Zelda began to sprinkle colorful toppings onto flattened, rolled doughs and cautiously set them into the ovens, Marth uneasily carried a large, silver tray with a fresh, warm pizza. The pizza was a tad unusual to Marth, as half of it was anchovies and mushrooms, an odd combination to the bluenette. The other half just had a strange, light-green vegetable of some sort and plain cheese. Marth softly smiled to himself. It looked like one of the customers had a unique taste!

"Let's see... Number 38... Where is it?" Marth mumbled to himself as he looked around the restaurant for a table with the number on it. After looking pass a few seated customers enjoying their satisfying foods and several empty tables, Marth's eyes finally wandered onto a round table near the salad bar and an overhead TV.

Sitting at the table were a fox and an avian. The fox had golden-brown fur and green eyes that reminded Marth of limes and emeralds. He was dressed in a long-sleeved, dark-green shirt, a white hoodie, and long jeans. The avian had indigo feathers and sharp, piercing blue eyes, which resembled blueberries. He was dressed similarly to his Canidae friend, however he was wearing a red shirt instead of a green one. The two were browsing the Internet via a laptop, snickering at the hilarious virtual posts under their breaths.

"Erm, here's your order." Marth softly spoke as he set the pizza onto the table.

The two anthropomorphic friends took notice of Marth's quiet voice.

"Oh, it's here already?" Fox spoke, a bit surprised.

"What do you mean?" Marth curiously asked, confused at what Fox just said.

"Usually when we come here, it takes them like thirty minutes just to finish a medium pizza." Falco tried to explain.

"I guess the pink puffball working in there got fired." Fox added with a shrug.

"Wait, pink puffball?" Matth questioned out loud.

"Whenever we hang out here, we would look into the kitchen and see a pink puffball eating as much pizza as he can. Remember that, Fox?" Falco asked, hoping to stir up some hilarious memories.

"I remember!" Fox laughed, trying not to draw some much attention to him and his friend. "I can't believe he managed to have that job for months!"

Marth smiled bashfully back and giggled silently to himself. "Well, I need to go back to work. I don't want to get into trouble!"

"No problem, you can chill with us once when your shift it over!" Fox responded. "We'll be here for a while!"

As Marth hurried back to the kitchen, he passed the counter where Ike was sitting down in a small chair. He was bored, as there were no more customers to take orders from yet. His colbalt gazed at his leather watch. Gee, when was his shift going to be over? Ten minutes sure felt like an hour! Time was a mischievous thing. If you were currently enjoying yourself, it would carelessly fly by without a sound. If you were trapped in a boring situation, it would grab a large bowl of buttery popcorn and watch you suffer in amusement.

Marth's quick footsteps caused Ike to look up and gaze at him directly in the eyes. Sharp, cobalt eyes glared into soft, cerulean eyes. With a small jolt of fruit, Marth immediately halted in his path and stared back, his blue orbs nearly bulging out of sockets. Why was Ike looking at him like that? Did he need something? Did he unintentionally light the fuse of anger?

Not wanting to feel terror and pain, Marth slowly backed away and rushed back into the kitchen, just as when Ike opened his mouth to say something. With a depressed sigh, Ike looked down at his shadow, a patch of darkness surrounding him. No matter how hard he struggled to break free and how fast he fled, he could never escape from the darkness beneath him.

Long, tiring hours passed. The clock, which read eleven o' clock, gradually turned into three 'o clock, marking the end of Link's and Marth's shifts. Link wiped his sweaty brow as he picked up his small, black backpack and put it on. Marth sighed softly in exhaustion as he stood outside of the doorway, waiting for Link to get ready.

"When does your shift end?" Link asked Zelda, who was setting a pizza into an oven.

"In another hour." Zelda answered. "I'm working an extra hour so I can raise my payment."

"Good job!" Link praised with a thumbs up. "It's a good thing that you're workin' hard!"

"Thanks! Are you and Marth going to work tomorrow?" Zelda questioned.

"Yeah, we are!" Link answered with a small nod. "We gotta work hard to earn what we want!"

"Well, I guess I'll see you and Marth tomorrow!" Zelda concluded with a small smile. "Goodbye!" She waved farewell to the two males.

"Bye, Zelda!" Marth said to the brunette with a large, bubbly smile.

"See ya tomorrow, Zelda!" Link said to Zelda before he and Marth left the kitchen.

As Link and Marth began to leave the pizza joint, they noticed Fox and Falco, who were still seated at table #38 and playing with their laptop. The two were smirking under their breaths. Marth raised an eyebrow; they were here for a while... Why were they not kicked out? Was this not considered to be loitering? Marth noticed the empty silver tray in front of them. Well, at least they finished their pizza...

"They've been here for a while." Link spoke up.

"Yeah, I don't know why..." Marth replied. He suddenly began to tap his feet nervously.

Link worriedly looked at Marth when his pointed ears caught the soft tapping. "Are you ok?"

"C...Can I use the restroom first before we go?" Marth softly asked. "I can't hold it in any longer..."

"Sure, take your time!" Link answered with a nod. "I'll be waitin'!"

With a quick nod, Marth hurried into the restroom, his lower stomach pushing and stinging. He bit his lips lightly as he rushed into a stall, slammed the door shut, and locked it. He could not hold it in for another minute.

When he finished his business, Marth carefully excited the stall and went to the tiny, white sink to wash his hands. Although they seemed spotless and clean, Marth knew that there were more things that met the eyes. His hands turned the facet on and crystal-clear, cold water began to pour onto his hands.

Marth's cerulean eyes wandered onto a bottle of pink soap that smelled like roses. As he poured the thick liquid and rubbed his hands together, forming a sweet, bubbly foam, his eyes caught a strange, orange bottle. A tiny, white label was pasted around it with bold, black text. After drying his hands, Marth picked the bottle up and and to read the tiny text. His eyes could only recognize four words: Prescribed to Ike Greil.

What was this? It looked dreadfully like the bottle of mysteriously pills that were prescribed to Roy... Ike seemed to be awfully lonely like Roy. Maybe his was also diagnosed with depression! This might explain his aggressive behavior!

However, Roy did not express any forms of aggression, at least to Marth. When he first met the redhead, he was a bit grouchy and a tad rude. Instead of expressing his loneliness with rage and force like Ike, Roy's ways of painting his empty feelings is splattering it with a drop of vulgar words, a splash of "What's in it for me?" attitude, and adding a desired need for sleep for details. Yes, Roy did get into an enraged argument with Eliwood, however the main causing factor was a marred relationship between father and son. Both of their ships were sinking so quickly; it was miraculous that both of them managed to get into a life boat before they were hopelessly left in the freezing sea.

What was Ike's problem? Marth continued to look at the bottle for a few seconds before leaving the restroom. He did not want to keep Link waiting!

"Hey, you're back! Let's get goin'!" Link said as Marth approached him. His azure eyes caught the orange bottle clutched in Marth's right hand. "Err, Marth? What's this?"

Marth showed Link the bottle. "I found it in the restroom and I think it belongs to Ike..."

"Hmmm? This?" Link asked as he took the bottle from Marth and examined it briefly. "It's empty... I think we should just throw it away!"

"No!" Was Marth's blunt answer. "It has Ike's name on it! What if he needs it?"

"I don't think Ike needs it." Link argued calmly. "I reckon that if it's empty, you can't really do much with it."

Marth childishly made a pouting facial expression at Link, making the Hylian reconsider. "But, if you really want to give 'em back to Ike, then sure! Ike isn't here, so it looks like we need to drop 'em off at his house on the way back."

Marth nodded in understanding as he and Link began to exit the joint. As soon as they stepped out of the building into the humid air, which contrasted against the cool, air conditioned atmosphere, and began to walk down the sidewalk towards the noisy, bustling street, Link asked, "Are ya sure you want to do this? The last time we were talkin' about Ike, you seemed to be really scared of him!"

"Don't worry! I'm not afraid of him anymore!" Marth cheerfully insisted with a reassuring smile.

As he walked up the endless, wide driveway and approached the large, white door that loomed over him like a mountain, Marth began to anxiously tremble. This was not a good idea! What if Ike answered the door? If he did, would he explode his wrath and anger onto him, like what he did at the game arcade? Would Marth himself be able to barely flee for his own life? Marth reached for the doorbell and froze as a sudden beam of fear made of ice struck him. Maybe he should not do this...

Link was standing behind Marth, waiting for him. "Hey Marth, what's wrong? You ok?" he called.

"...Not r-really." Marth nervously answered with a timid whimper. "I'm scared."

With a funny, somewhat scornful look and a lopsided grin, Link's left brow lowered in disbelief as he approached the door and stood by Marth's side.

"It can't be that bad." Link huffed as he rang the doorbell.

Marth jumped in jolt and fright. His cerulean eyes slowly widening, he gasped, "No, Link! Why did you do that!?"

Link did not answer Marth's question. Instead, he reassured, "It's ok, Marth. It isn't that bad."

Marth made a weak yet loud whine and quickly hid behind Link as the door slowly opened, revealing a middle-aged woman with long, indigo hair tied in a ponytail and gentle, teal eyes. She was wearing a pure white blouse and navy-blue, denim jeans. In her hands was a thick-covered novel.

"Oh, hello, Link!" Elena greeted with a warm smile. "It's nice seeing you today. Do you need anything?"

"Nuthin', my friend Marth here wants to return something to you." Link answered calmly. He gave Marth a calming look, which slowly urged the bluenette to come out of his shell.

His shoulders rose in a coy position, Marth carefully approached Elena and shakily gave her the clear, orange bottle. "I... I found it in the pizza joint where we work." he shyly explained as his cheeks turned into a rosy pink. "I know that the bottle is empty, but..." Marth paused for a moment as he arranged the sentence in his head. "...but it has Ike's name on it, and... When I think of names on things, I think of how the owner really wants it back."

With a sincere smile, Elena took the bottle and said, "Thank you very much, Marth. Are you sure you two don't need anything?"

"Don't worry, Mrs. Greil." Link answered with a cool smile. "We just came here to return the bottle. It's nice seeing you!"

"Same to you!" Elena replied before closing the door. "Have a good day!"

Marth remained quiet as he and Link crossed the street. As he looked back, he felt that the street was a long, tall barrier separating him from Ike, mush to his relief. He also began to wonder how Ike's mother tolerated her son, who would have violent eruptions of fury any minute. She was so sweet and friendly compared to Ike...

"Link, how did to do that?" Marth asked suddenly.

"Do what?" Link asked. He and Marth stood in front of the Pheraes' driveway.

"Knock on the door." Marth answered. "I was really scared compared to you."

"Well, when ya doing somethin' like that, you need to have courage." Link explained. "Courage is when you can do somethin' that would normally scare someone else."

"I don't think I have any courage..." Marth sighed sadly.

Link gave Marth a pat on the back. "Don't worry, someday it will come. Besides, havin' courage doesn't mean that you're not scared. I have to admit, because you, Roy, and Pit were sayin' how scary Ike is, I was kinda nervous. But I'm ok now, so I'm not that scared anymore!"

"I see!" Marth smiled sweetly at Link. "Well, I'll see you tomorrow, Link! We'll meet here in the morning, right?"

"Right!" Link said as he turned and began to head to his house. "See you later!"

"Bye!" Marth called before walking calmly back to the front of his house.

When Marth reached into his pant pockets, took out his house key, and stuck it into the lock, he turned around and faced the Greil's house. A bolt of panic struck him as he noticed a pair of cobalt eyes peering from a window, hiding behind the blinds, silently watching him. As soon when the eyes caught Marth looking directly back at him, the orbs of blue immediately vanished. Marth just shrugged, unlocked the door, and entered his home.

Author's Notes: Whew... not dead.

Even though I finished this chapter a while back, I couldn't find the time to upload it onto my computer, so that's why the updates are also late. One does not simply have free time when doing a school sport and taking four advanced placement classes! However, the sport season ends in late October, so hang on everyone!

Also, I'm not closing my poll yet, so check it out if you hadn't and want to!

Story Questions:

Why do you think Zelda is afraid of Link and Marth?

What is your favorite place to hang out with a friend or two?

What is with Ike?

Chapter 14: Chapter 14

Cerulean orbs gazed at the shadowy, midnight-blue ceiling as the sound of a clock ticked and tocked soothingly. However, the soft yet repetitive sound was futile in lulling Marth to sleep. With a soft sigh, Marth tossed in his bed and looked at Roy, who seemed to be asleep.

Marth tried every technique he knew in order to fast asleep, but it was one of those moments when the brain refuses to rest your body after a tiring day. Counting to a hundred, not thinking about anything, and even sarcastically telling himself that he did not need sleep failed to make Marth drowsy. Marth then tried to count Skiddos leaping over a fence.

Nope. It did not work a bit.

How about pretending to be stranded on an island?

Repeat.

Slow breathing?

Rinse and repeat.

Marth pouted and grumbled to himself. Yes, he felt the exhaustion in his heavy eyes lips and his light-headed mind. But for a strange reason, his brain decided to hold onto the edge of the cliff of sleep! It refused to drop his consciousness into the depths of dreams!

"Hey Marth, are you still awake?" Roy suddenly asked.

Marth sat up in the sleeping bag. "I thought you were asleep!" he whispered.

Roy smirked. "Well, something is bothering me. That's why I can't fall asleep."

"Same here, except that I don't really have a problem." Marth responded. "What's bothering you, Woy?"

"It's the art fair." Roy answered with a worried tone in his voice. "I still don't know what to draw. Also, I'm not sure if I should do some street art, or just part an artwork on a canvas or something like that."

"What's a street art?" Marth asked curiously.

"It's when you take an image from the Internet and draw the picture on the streets with chalk pastel." Roy explained. "The results are terrific, however it is time consuming. That's why I'm not sure if I should do street art or an ordinary artwork."

"Woy, I can help you on you street art." Marth replied, blinking. "If I remember correctly, the festival is not until this Saturday. I don't work on Saturdays. Link also doesn't work on Saturdays, but I'm not sure if he wants to join us."

"If that's so, I'll consider doing street art." Roy responded with a small smile.

Muffled yet loud, angry shouts outside were heard gently bumping on the thick walls and windows. At first, the two boys ignored the soft bickering, thinking that a married couple in the neighborhood was arguing with their partner outside. Marth rolled onto his stomach like a Growlie obeying a trick, buried his face into his pillow, and exhaled loudly in frustration.

"Are you ok?" Roy asked.

"Yeah, it's just that I can't fall asleep..." Marth sighed his answer.

The angry shouting eventually turned into vicious, disputing yells. Several voices joined in the furious, heated commotion, giving strength to the loudness of the argument that now echoed down the street and slammed on everyone's windows. Marth turned onto his left side and looked at the pitch-black windows. The windows were covered with binds, only allowing fleeing light from the tall, illuminating lamps outside.

"I hear loud voices outside..." Marth spoke as he sat up in his sleeping bag. "I think something bad is happening."

"It's probably some arguing neighbors." Roy reassured calmly. "Just ignore them."

"They sound really angry..." Marth remarked as he got out of his sleeping bag and went to the window. He carefully parted the window blinds and nosily looked at the scene across the street.

Three strangers dressed in dark suits were standing in front of the Greil's doorway, speaking to Elena and her husband Gawain, who were stubbornly blocking their path. Although Marth could not read their facial expressions due to the darkness and clearly hear their conversation, judging by their gestures and tone of their rising voices, he could tell that they were not in a friendly conversation. The strangers did not seem to be ordinary residents of this neighborhood. Who were they, and why were they here? Curious and wanting to discover what was happening, Marth set the side of his head against the window and tried to listen to the conversation. As he did that, he failed to see one of the men swiftly pull something out of his pocket.

BANG!

The sound of a fired gun rang down the street, causing Marth to flinch, cry out in fright, and duck down to the floor. Roy's first instinct was to hurry to Marth's side. What the heck happened? Did Marth get hit? The window did not shatter, but still!

"Marth, are you ok?" Roy asked panicky, looking at the white carpet for any traces of blood. He failed to see any. Marth answered Roy's question with a large, tight embrace and buried his face into Roy's smaller shoulder.

"Are you ok?" Roy asked again as he set a gentle hand onto Marth's trembling back.

"I think so..." Marth softly whimpered.

Roy opened the window blinds and peered outside. Lights in every house down the street flashed on as concerned and terrified people hurried out of their safe barriers to see what the commotion was. Her long, green hair tied in a large bun and dressed in a white bedgown, Palutena cautiously looked around for danger, before hurrying towards the scene armed with a broomstick. Rusl boldly approached the crowd with Link by his side.

The lights in the hallways flashed on and the sound of hurrying footsteps thundered through the halls and down the stairs. Roy looked out the slightly-open door and caught a split second-image of his parents hurrying towards the stairs.

"Lyn, stay here and watch the boys!" Roy heard Eliwood order Lyn.

"I don't want anything to happen to you, ok?" Lyn's voice sternly replied. "I'm coming!"

"I don't want Marth and Roy to get hurt, understand?" Eliwood retorted back. "I'll be ok. I promise."

"I understand." Lyn replied calmly.

Marth jolted in Roy's arms and nervously looked around when he heard the front door open and violently slam shut. "Hey Woy, do you think everything's ok?" he asked softly.

"I don't know." Roy answered, embracing Marth tighter.

"Are you scared?" Marth could feel Roy's quick heat eats against his chest.

"A little." Roy's body went tense. "I don't know what's happening."

There was a small knock on the door and Lyn opened the door and stuck her head through. Her emerald eyes sparkled with concern and worry as she entered the room and approached the embracing teens. The gem-like orbs narrowed in sadness when she noticed Marth quivering slightly in field and Roy's pale skin, which resembled the color of snow.

"M-Mom, what's happening?" Roy questioned softly, his voice trembling nervously.

"I don't know." Lyn kneeled next to the boys and set a gentle head on Roy's shoulder. "I think there was a shooting across the street."

"A shooting?!" Marth gasped loudly.

"Yes." Lyn reassuringly answered. She began to stroke Marth's azure hair, which felt as soft as a feather. "It happened across the street."

"Where's Dad?" Roy questioned.

"He's across the street, trying to figure out what's happening." Lyn caught the terror-stricken expression on Roy's face. "Don't worry, the other neighbors are there. He's not on his own."

"Is he going to be ok?" Marth's voice anxiously trembled. He set his head on Lyn's chest and whimpered, "I don't want

him to get hurt."

"He'll be ok." Lyn answered cooly. She wrapped her arms around Roy and Marth. "I promise."

Roy and Marth began to slowly relax in Lyn's arms for the next few minutes. Much to their relief, after about ten minutes, they heard the front door open loudly, loud footsteps stepping in, and the door gently closing. The sound of the door locking and a soft, exhausted sigh confirmed the guest was Eliwood.

"Oh, your father is back." Lyn spoke to Roy, before turning to Marth. "See, Eliwood's ok? It's ok!"

Strangely, Marth did not reply. Upon investigating the silent male, Lyn learned at the bluenette had fallen asleep. His breathing was quiet and in rhythm with his rising and falling chest. With a soft yawn, Marth cuddled closer to Lyn and sighed.

"He fell asleep..." Roy remarked with a weary smile.

"So innocent..." Lyn mumbled before saying, "I'm going to put him in bed."

Using her gathered strength and trying to not wake Marth, Lyn was about to gentle set Marth into his sleeping bag, when Roy suddenly stopped her. "Wait!"

"What's wrong?" Lyn asked, a bit confused at Roy's action.

"Put Marth in my bed." Roy ordered. "After what just happened, I don't think Marth wants to be... Alone."

Lyn smiled at Roy. "Whatever you say."

Lyn carefully lifted Marth and slowly carried him to Roy's bed. Once when she carefully settled the bluenette onto the bed, Lyn turned to Roy and sternly said, "I'm going ask your father what happened."

"Can I come?" Roy asked.

"I don't think it's a good idea." Lyn answered, shaking her head. "It's serious talk. You might not be able to understand what's going on."

"Will you Marth and me what happened tomorrow?" Roy sat down on his bed.

"It depends on your father." Lyn responded as she exited the room. "Just get some sleep now, understand?"

"Yes." Roy said as Lyn slowly closed the door. As he got into his bed and tossed the covers over him and Marth, he suspected that something happened at Ike's home, since he lived directly across the streets from him. But, what happened? Did Ike suddenly get infuriated, happened to have a gun conveniently in his hand, and fired the shot in retort?

"I won't be surprise if Ike is involved in this." Roy mumbled unclearly to himself.

Leaning against the oven, Marth was about to doze off and drift into the sea of sleep when he was jolted awake by a small pat on the shoulder. Marth's heavy eyes snapped open as adrenaline rushed through his veins and forced his exhausted body awake. The first thing his cerulean orbs meet was Link's stern facial expression.

"Hey Marth, wake up!" Link ordered. "I know that you're feeling sleepy and all, but now's not the time to sleep!"

Marth yawned softly and rubbed the dark circles under his eyes. His joints cracked loudly when he stretched his cramped and knotted body. "Sorry, Link... It's just that, after when happened last night... I couldn't really sleep well..."

"I understand." Link replied as his strict expression softened. "Still, we need to work! We can't slack off!"

"Right!" Marth replied with a tired yet large smile.

Zelda, who was making a small pizza on the counter and trying to avoid the boys, suddenly spoke. "Wait, what happened last night?" she asked curiously.

"There was a gunshot that woke up everyone in our neighborhood." Link explained. "Apparently, there was some kind of a commotion across the street. I went out with my Dad, but he quickly sent me right back into the house for safety."

"So, you don't know what actually happened?"

Link scratched the back of his head. "Well, all I know is that Ike's family was involved with some strangers who wanted somethin' from them. But, we don't know the truth. So, I'm just kinda gossipin' right now."

"It's all right." Zelda reassured with a small smile before turning back to her work. She briefly looked out the open window and peered at Ike, who was quietly sitting at the counter waiting for an order. "I hope he's ok..."

Link glanced out of the window, looked at the back of Ike's indigo head, and replied, "I think he is!"

Hours of work slowly passed, and Marth's drowsiness did not crease. Everything from loading and taking out a pizza and serving it to the patrons seemed to eat away all of his energy. His balance was topsy-turvy like a top slowly creasing its spinning. When Marth finally gathered his little, feeble strength and set a large, silvery tray on top of the oven. He looked at his reflection in the silvery, mirror-like object and saw an exhausted teenager with uneven, tangled blue hair and shadowy circles surrounding his pink eyes.

Link noticed Marth's weariness. "Hey Marth, why don't you take a small break or somethin'?" he offered. "If you keep on workin', you might faint! Take a minute or two!"

Marth exhaled loudly in relief. "Are you sure?" he asked. "I don't want to get into trouble and hold everything up!"

"Don't worry, Zelda and I got it covered!" Link cooly stated. "We just need to work harder, right Zelda?"

"Y-Yes!" Zelda replied to Link.

"Go to the restroom and splash water onto your face. It'll wake you up!" Link suggested.

Marth nodded and exited the kitchen. As he approached the restroom door and reached for its handle, his round ears caught a faint sound coming from behind. What was it? Marth nosily put the side of his head against the door and tried to identify the noise.

It sounded like crying.

When Marth finally identified the feeble sound as weeping, the soft sobbing suddenly creased. It became completely silent, well nearly silent, as Marth could hear some of the patrons talking, Fox and Falco smirking to themselves (Yes, they were loitering and playing on their laptop as usual!), and the pinball machine ringing and blaring its sound effects. Marth's eyes scanned the room before a wall clock caught his eyes, reminding him that he was not off the hook of work yet.

Remembering the main reason why he was taking a break in the first place, Marth quickly entered the bathroom and immediately halted into his path. All of his senses immediately froze in shock as he made eye contact with narrow, cobalt eyes.

Standing in front of the sink was Ike. Marth's first survival instant was to avoid starting a conversation with him and quickly flee the scene. However, there was a tiny detail in Ike's eyes that stood out to Marth. The last time he looked into his eyes, Marth spotted a hint of sparkling sadness in a pool of livid, narrow blue. This time, Ike's eyes had lost their lively, blue hue and small sparkle. The bright colors were clouded with a wave of dull, lifeless gray. The surrounding white sea that surrounded the gray island was slightly pink from hysterically shedding tears.

Marth stood still for a few moments and continued to look at Ike. No, this could not be possible! A tough and intimidating guy like Ike could not cry! This was the same person who violently pushed him on the ground and made him cry in front of his friends! Wait, a person? No, Ike was not a person! He was a terrifying monster! A dragon that spewed his flames of fury on everything that got in his way!

Sniffing softly, Ike uncharacteristically looked away, covered his face; which were streaked pink with dry, warm tears, and began to tremble like a nervous, timid child. Marth's alarmed expression fell and began to relax.

Without thinking twice, Marth suddenly stepped towards Ike, threw his arms around the larger male's abdomen, and gave him a warm, soothing embrace. He flinched when he felt Ike's muscles tense in his arms.

"What am I doing?" Marth asked himself as he cringed, waiting for Ike to strike him.

The thundering pain never came. Ike's attempts to hold in his sobs failed, as a small, feeble whimper fled his mouth. Unable to hold it in for any longer, Ike buried his face into the smaller male's shoulder and began to weep loudly. Marth set a gentle, warm head on his trembling back, encouraging the indigo-haired male to let everything out. He was attempted to ask what was wrong. However, he stayed silent, as he did not want to ruin the moment.

When Marth stepped into the house, the first thing he did was drop his bag onto the wool carpet, collapsed onto his knees, and exhaled loudly in exhaustion. After hours of working endlessly and tediously, he was finally rewarded a long, relaxing break. Marth shook his head slightly as he tried to keep his eyes open and prevent himself from passing out in front of the door. He felt a thunderous wave of freedom wash over him, resulting in a pinch of adrenaline rush through his veins. The rush lasted for about a few seconds though, and Marth quickly reverted back to his exhausted state.

"Hey Marth, why are you on the floor like that?" Roy asked, looking at Marth. He was seated on the sofa, watching the TV.

"I'm really tired and hungry..." Marth groaned grouchily.

"Sit on the sofa with me and take a nap." Roy suggested, giving Marth a gesture to come. "Also, Mom and Dad are making dinner. It should be ready in twenty minutes."

With a quiet "Mmmm hmmm.", Marth trudged towards the couch and sat next to Roy. He kicked his black tennis shoes off and slouched ungracefully on the sofa.

Marth's heavy cerulean eyes gazed at the flashing colors flickering and sparking inside the mechanical box, followed by voices and banging sounds. "What is this show about?" he sleepily asked.

"It's about murder mysteries." Roy answered with eagerness in his voice. Marth could tell that the redhead's interest was glued into the show.

"Really? Don't murders scare you?" Marth questioned. He curled into a small ball and laid his head against a large, fluffy pillow. Drowsiness began to spin in his head.

"Some of them are pretty disturbing." Roy admitted. "But, I like the, because they teach me to be aware of my surroundings."

"Oh." Was Marth's simple response. He closed his eyes for a few seconds and used his internal strength to open them again. "What this case about?"

"It's about this mass murderer who killed eleven people." Roy explained. "Right now, the police is interrogating suspects."

Marth trembled nervously at Roy's answer. "Why is this murderer killing so many people?"

"So far, I don't know. The show did not tell me yet. Maybe if we watch for a little bit longer, it'll tell us who is the murderer and why he committed these murders."

Marth feebly nodded and continued to watch the show. As lights flickered brightly in his eyes, a top known as sleepiness began to spin faster. Marth sighed under his breath. Come on, he wanted to find out who was his horrendous murderer! Why did sleep want to claim him at this important moment, instead of during the middle of the night?!

Despite Marth's nagging, angry protests, his efforts were in vain. He eventually drifted to sleep.

"Hey Marth, wake up!" Roy's voice exclaimed as Marth was shaken awake by the cardinal-haired male.

Marth moaned loudly; he dreaded being woken up in the middle of sleep. "What is it, Woy?" he huffed in irritation.

"Dad said that dinner's ready." Roy replied with a small smile. "Didn't you say that you're hungry?"

"Y-Yeah!" Marth piped up as he clumsily and quickly got off the sofa. In the process, he clumsily stumbled over his own feet and took a small tumble on the floor.

"Hey Marth, are you ok?!" Roy asked in concern.

Marth shakily got up. Despite feeling a bit distressed from his tiny fall and a little embarrassed, he managed to bubbly smile at Marth. His grin resembled those of a little child's. "Heheh, I'm ok! I just tripped because I felt tired!"

With an understanding nod, Roy led Marth into the dining room, where Eliwood and Lyn waiting for them. The two were sitting across from each other and having a small, quiet conversation. Sitting on the square, wooden table were four cups of apple juice, four plates with a ham and cheese sandwich and a small salad, and four sets of utensils. The sliding door behind the table was slightly open, allowing cool air to enter the stuffy, warm room. A thin screen in front of the opening prevented pesky insects such as mosquitoes and flies from pursuing the freshly-made food.

"Mom, Dad, we're here!" Roy said as he and Marth sat down at the table.

"Oh!" Eliwood exclaimed, snapping out of his tiny world. "They're here! Let's get started!"

While Eliwood and Lyn calmly enjoyed their meal and Roy hastily devoured his dinner, Marth unsteadily looked at the meal presented to him and unsurely picked up his sandwich. It was a moment when you were starving and desperate for nourishment, but you were not really in the mood to chew and taste the grub. After sniffing and staring at the sandwich, Marth took a tiny nibble and shakily swallowed. Even though he took a small nap, he did not have the energy to eat.

"Marth, are you ok?" Lyn asked, raising an eyebrow at the bluenette. "Usually, you eat very quickly."

"I'm just tired..." Marth softly puffed. "After last night's commotion, I didn't really sleep..."

Roy quickly slurped his juice. "Oh yeah! Dad, what happened last night?"

"Oh yes..." Eliwood began sternly. "Last night, some agents from the insane asylum confronted the Greils. They wanted to take Ike, their son."

"W-Why?" Marth asked with wide eyes. He remembered Ike in his arms, sobbing softly into his shoulder during work. Did that event have something to do with his despair and agony?

"Today, I talked to Mr. Greil during work." Eliwood continued. "Apparently, Ike has a bipolar disorder and the agents claimed that he was a huge threat to society."

"A bipolar disorder? What is that?" Roy asked. His brain began to place the pieces together. Was this why Ike often resorts to violence in situations?

"It's a mental disorder characterized by sudden mood swings." Eliwood continued. "One minute ago, you feel happy, the next thing you know, you feel furious. It's something that you can't control."

"No wonder why the insane asylum wants him!" Roy suddenly blurted out. "Ike's family is just wasting their energy! Why wouldn't they just hand him over?"

"Roy, Ike's family loves him dearly. It'll be hard to just hand him over to some corrupt strangers." Eliwood strictly claimed.

"He's a jerk!" Roy argued back. "Ike's the same guy who harassed Pit and me in school and made Marth cry in public! Why should he not be sent to the asylum?"

"The asylum is not the best place for Ike to be!" Eliwood answered bluntly, his voice rising. "He needs his loved ones by his side in order to live on!"

"Wait, what is this asylum and why is it a bad place?" Marth asked, feeling disordered like tangled hair.

Lyn sighed sadly before she began. "The insane asylum is a place where all people with mental disorders are sent to. Once when they are locked behind bars, they will never walk in the sun with their family and friends ever again."

"Doesn't the asylum help them?" Marth uncertainly asked. "I mean, they gathered everyone with these problems..."

"No, they don't." Eliwood responded in a low, monotone voice.

Marth shivered at the tone of the older redhead's tone of voice. "You've actually been there?"

"This is only a rumor, but there are stories of people fleeing from the asylum. Only a few managed to succeed. According to them, they were often left in the dark with little warmth or food. Apparently, the workers there took all the money that was meant for these people for themselves and neglected them." Eliwood described. Although he seemed to be calm, he was cringing painfully in the inside. His heart stung as he thought of the pain those people had to go through.

"Why don't they do something?" Marth questioned curiously. "Can't they just gather some people and fight against it?"

"The asylum is officially part of the government. If people launched a protest against it, it would be considered to be an attack towards the government. Despite the asylum's corruptions, sadly it is still very important piece to society. They are responsible for keeping the most notorious, psychotic sociopaths in history away from civilization." Eliwood shook his head miserably before taking a small sip from his cup.

"Do you know any of these 'sociopaths' that are held in there?" Marth was getting intrigued.

Eliwood paused for a few moments. "Well, I don't fully know all of them, but there was one mass murderer that stood out

to me."

"Who is it?" Marth softly asked, a bit afraid.

"His full name was never revealed to the public due to the atrocities he committed. His was known as the **Masked Slasher** by many." Eliwood simply answered.

There was a long pause.

"That name really sounds familiar." Lyn spoke up. "I think I heard that name a long time ago."

"He began his massacre eight years ago and claimed the lives of eleven innocent people." Eliwood replied emotionlessly. "I remember those days. People were so terrified, they locked their doors and windows shut and slept with a gun by their side."

"I was eight during that time..." Roy added. "Being just a kid, I didn't understand what was happening. The only thing I remember is Dad and Mom refusing to leave me alone. They would not let me out of their sight and tell me to sleep with them."

"Do you know why he killed so many people?" Marth enquired with large, fearful eyes.

"People don't clearly know why." Lyn answered. "Some people say he did it for amusement, others say that he did it for revenge. I think he was just crazy."

"How did he look like?"

Eliwood sighed at the wave of questions that Marth washed in. "His identity was never revealed, as if it was, it would shook the public and cause hysteria."

"I saw an episode about him today!" Roy added. "He was portrayed by a really muscular, tall, scary guy! That's how I think he looks like!"

"I think he was a gentleman who was part of a high social ranking who suddenly got a screw loose." Eliwood stated his opinion.

"I think he was just a large thug!" Lyn remarked. "I can't picture a gentleman becoming a mass-murderer!"

"Well, there's no way to figure that out!" Roy concluded. "The episode said that the Masked Slasher attempted to escape, only to get killed in an accident in the process!"

Marth smiled and made a quiet, gentle noise. "Well, I'm glad! At least everyone is safe from him now!"

There was... so much blood. Blood on the white walls. Blood on the ceilings. Blood on the ground... Blood on t-t-those dead bodies...

Why can't I move? I have this... largebloodyknife inmyhand. Both of my hands... arecoveredinblood.

What'sthat cryingnosie comingfrom? Whathappened? Someonepleasetellme...

"...MARTH! WAKE UP!"

Marth violently tossed and turn in his sleeping bag as he thrashed and struggled against the invisible forces threatening him, sniveling and screaming for help. Trying to pull him out of his night terror, Roy hastily grabbed Marth by his shoulder and began to fiercely shake him. This was a bit strange to him, as Marth seemingly never had a vicious response towards a nightmare before.

"Marth, WAKE UP!" Roy exclaimed before slapping Marth in the face with the palm of his hand.

With a short, high-pitched cry, Marth's eyes snapped open as he reconnected with reality. Cerulean orbs darted around the dark yet familiar room as his heart pumped panicky and his lungs squeaked for air. His breathing slowly calmed as he came to the conclusion that the terrifying scene was just a simple nightmare.

"That...That was just a... a dream..." Marth huffed shakily.

"Are you ok?" Roy asked.

"I think I am, Woy..." Marth uneasily answered. "That was a scary dream..."

"What happened? Did it have something to do with the Masked Slasher?"

"Yeah... I think so... I just saw dead people and lots of blood..." Marth whimpered softly as he remembered the shocking image.

Roy gave Marth a pat on the back. "Just try to go back to sleep." he said, trying to reassure the bluenette. "I don't want you to be very tired tomorrow. Next time during dinner, we won't talk about mass murderers and whatnot!"

"Really?" Marth asked childishly. "T-Thanks! Uh, sorry for waking you up like that..."

"It's okay! We all get nightmares." Roy assured. "Try to get some sleep and don't let it bother you."

"I'll try!" Marth cutely responded. "Goodnight, Woy!"

"Goodnight." Was Roy's last reply before he drifted to sleep.

As Marth snuggled his warm, cotton blanket, he looked at the ceiling, shut his eyes, and tried to fall back asleep. Despite his heart's protests, his brain refused to stop thinking about the horrible nightmare he had. It was like a drug; it is bad for you, however you could not resist taking it, or you would suffer from withdrawal.

"What was that dream about?" Marth quietly asked himself, so he would not wake up Roy. *"Why did it feel so familiar?"*

Author's Notes: The irony level is pretty high here.

Here's a super long chapter to make up for the waiting. In case you don't know, I'm currently on fall break. That doesn't mean I'm entirely free, as I have some homework given over the break. Welp, might as well get used it it.

Please excuse any typos in this chapter. I was rushing to finish this chapter because it was late and I really need my sleep. I didn't want to feel like Marth during work, ok? When I get the time, I'll go back, reread the chapter, and edit any errors.

Story Questions:

When you can't sleep, what do you do?

What was the strangest dream you've ever had? Personally, I once had a dream that I got up in the morning and got ready for school. I felt so disoriented when I actually got up!

Any suggestions for villains working in the asylum? (Can be in SSB or not.)

Chapter 15: Chapter 15

Dressed and ready for work, Marth quietly approached Link's doorstep and gave a few gentle knocks on the wooden door. As he patiently waited for the Hylian, he began to nervously glance around his surroundings. Yes, it was currently daytime. Daytime was the time of the day when little violence occurs. Yet, Marth did not want to take chances. After hearing the story about this Masked Slasher, Marth was now aware that anything could happen at any time of the day.

Speaking of the Masked Slasher, why did he seem so familiar? Did he have something to do with Marth's forgotten past? Marth looked at a single, lonely cloud slowly drifting across the clear sky. He could have brutally attacked him one night and left him on the dark, freezing beach; alone, helpless, and naked. But from what Marth heard from Roy, the Masked Slasher was killed on the very same day Eliwood discovered Marth brutally injured on the beach. Also, the Masked Slasher's murderous reign of terror ended years ago! How could he be connected with Marth? Maybe he knew him at some point...

Link did not reply to Marth's knocks on the door. With a raised, doubtful eyebrow, Marth knocked on the door again, harder and louder. He heard footsteps hurrying to get to the door and muffled, loud voices. Marth clutched his hands tightly and gently pinched the sleeve of his shirt. Did he accidentally interrupt something? Marth uneasily looked down when Link clumsily opened the door and replied to Marth's calls. Marth was a bit surprised. Instead of being fully dressed for work, Link was dressed in his casual clothes, which included his trademark floppy hat, lime-green shirt, and jeans. However, he looked a bit disorganized. His cap was lopsided on his head, resembling a waterfall of forest green. His dirty-blond hair was disheveled and uncombed. Even his azure eyes reflected his exhaustion and confusion.

"Link, are you ready for work?" Marth asked.

Link nervously scratched the back of his head. "No, I can't go to work today." he answered with a tired smiled. "My parents are out today and I need to watch over my brothers. Don't worry, I let Dedede know. If my parents come back early, I might still go."

"Oh, I see..." Marth softly responded, before smiling sweetly at the blond. "Well, I'll be going now. I'll see you later!"

"See you, Marth!" Link said, before the sound of a window shattering followed. Link's pointy ears lowered as he groaned in irritation. "Urk, now what?" he mumbled as he slowly closed the door.

Marth shrugged to himself as he walked away from Link's home. Once when he reached the sidewalk, he immediately paused and anxiously looked around. The bluenette's cerulean eyes cautiously examined every shadow, corner, and bush. His stomach suddenly felt bloated with the gas of anxiety, causing him to feel nauseous.

"I feel scared..." Marth softly said to himself. He did not feel safe without someone by his side. Not wanting to miss work and get possibly attacked, Marth began to think of who should occupy him to the pizza joint. Eliwood and Lyn were instantly crossed out; the two adults were at work. Same with Link, as he was busy with babysitting his younger brothers. Pit could not come, as he was busy with a sport. Maybe Roy, but he probably does not want to stay at the pizza joint until Marth's shift was done. He probably wanted to return home, which was a bit of a hazard to Marth, as he sensed that Roy could get attacked by a stranger on the way back.

Just as when Marth was about to give up and think of a good, reasonable excuse to not go to work, he heard a door across the street open slowly and close gently. He looked up and spotted Ike leaving his home for work. Marth hesitantly faced Ike. Should he walk with him...?

Ike suddenly looked up and noticed Marth timidly standing across the street from him. "Hey, what's up?" he asked.

Marth jumped, as he was caught off-guard. "Um... Well..." he shyly and softly started.

"I can't hear you." Ike bluntly called. He gestured to Marth to cross the street. "Come closer."

Marth's shoulders tensed up in shyness and he coyly looked down at his shoes.

"Come here!" Ike called again. "I'm not gonna hurt you!"

Swallowing his nervousness, Marth hurriedly skittered across the street and cautiously approached Ike. He clutched the left sleeve of his shirt tightly as he fearfully made eye contact with the larger, taller male. Timid, wide cerulean orbs quivered slightly at the sight of bold, cobalt orbs.

"Now, what's up?" Ike asked again with a raised brow.

"I... Well..." Marth started, his voice slightly shaking. "N-Nothing's up to be honest...?"

"You look really nervous. What's wrong?"

Marth eyed his surroundings before answering, "Well, I just don't feel safe... I think that someone's following me..."

"That someone is me, right?" Ike teased.

Marth did not catch the tone of sarcasm that rang in Ike's voice. "N-N-No!" He softly exclaimed. "I don't know that person!"

Ike laughed at the smaller bluenette's naive response before asking, "You're going to work, right?"

"Yeah..." Marth hesitantly answered.

"If you're so scared to walk to work on your own, then why don't you come with me?" Ike offered.

"...Sure..." Marth smiled shyly and nodded.

Together, Marth and Ike began to walk to the pizza joint. Much to Marth's aghast, his fear of being stalked by a psychotic killer was replaced by the fear of walking side-by-side with a killer! Marth was still a bit doubtful of Ike. For some reason, he was being unusually friendly towards him. Why was that? Was Ike plotting something? As Marth asked himself those questions, he did not notice that he was beginning to walk behind Ike.

"Hey, why are you walking behind me?" Ike suddenly asked as he turned around. "I don't want to lose you in the crowd!"

"I..." Marth timidly started. He hurried to Ike's side and looked down in shame. "I'm sorry... It's just that... It's kinda weird..."

"What's weird?" Ike asked.

"Everyone says that you're really..." Marth immediately paused. He was too afraid to say that last, insulting adjective.

"Let me guess, mean." Ike guessed.

"...Yeah..." Marth whimpered.

Ike gave Marth a gentle pat on the head, causing Marth to flinch slightly. "Look, just trust me. I won't hurt you this time."

"...Okay..." Marth nervously replied.

The two continued to walk down the city streets towards the joint. On the way, Marth suddenly asked, "Did you get the bottle?"

"What are you talking about?" Ike asked.

"I found an orange bottle in the joint's restroom." Marth explained. "It had you name on it."

"Oh, that!" Ike responded with a small twinkle in his eyes. "Yeah, my mom gave it to me. I saw you and..." Ike abused awkwardly; he forgot Link's name.

"Link." Marth reminded.

"Yeah, Link! I saw you and Link go to my house!" Ike continued. His small smile suddenly fell into a sad look. "I thought you guys were going to visit; I was disappointed when you guys left..."

"I'm sorry..." Marth apologized.

"I sometimes wish that I never had a bipolar disorder." Ike sighed. "People would view me as just a normal person, not a monster who deserves to be locked up in the asylum..."

"Erm, I still see you as a person!" Marth immediately spoke, receiving a look of doubt from Ike. "Really!"

There was silence between the two bluenettes; the only things they heard were people passing by and the cars zooming down the streets.

"The bottle that I found in the bathroom... Didn't it contain pills that treat your disorder?" Marth asked curiously.

"Yeah, but they didn't really work for me." Ike admitted. "Instead of making me control my emotions easier, they made me

more infuriated for some reason. I'm not taking any medications now, and so far, I feel better than usual."

"That's good." Marth smiled sweetly at Ike.

"Hey look, we're already here!" Ike pointed, as he and Marth approached the joint. As they entered the building, he added, "I'll talk to you later. Right now, we need to work!"

"Okay, I'll talk to you later!" Marth finished as he hurried towards the kitchen.

About two hours later, Link hurried into the joint. Although he was dressed in his work clothes, it was obvious that he had rushed. His dress shirt was slightly unbuttoned, his hair was still mattered and uncombed, and his face was pink from running endlessly.

"I'm here, guys!" he greeted to Marth and Zelda as he dumped his backpack onto a nearby chair. "Sorry that I'm late!"

"Link! You look really tired!" Marth exclaimed.

Zelda, who was making a small pizza in the corner, just took a quick glance at the other Hylian and minded her business. Hey, this was Link's problem! Not hers!

Link just forced a small smile. "Yeah, I kinda am. But that's not gonna stop me from workin'! Besides, I'm gonna work an extra two hours to make up the time I lost."

Although she kept her back turned, Zelda was slowly freaking out in the inside. Oh my gosh, Link was going to be here for another two hours?! Well, at least Marth was going to be gone for the meantime! But, that meant Link will come to her whenever he needed something! It looked like she needed to endure Link until the end of work!

A few more hours passed, and Marth's and Ike's work shift was finally over. Their shirts slightly soaked with warm sweat and their faces red with exhaustion, the two bluenettes hurriedly gathered their belongings. Both of them were glad, as they finally have the rest of the day to do whatever they want.

"See you tomorrow, Link!" Marth said cheerfully as he and Ike exited the kitchen.

Ike just simply wave with a small, calm grin.

"Bye, guys!" Link called. He then turned to Zelda, who was trying her best to ignore the boys. "Hey Zelda, if you need any help, just let me know, got it?"

"Ok." Was Zelda's only reply.

As Marth and Ike were about to exit the building, Fox, who was sitting at his table with his best friend Falco as usual, suddenly called them. "Hey Blue and Purple! You wanna see this?"

Curious, Ike and Marth approached them. "Yeah, what is it?" Ike asked. He was a bit intrigued, as usually, the two anthropomorphic males ignored him and minded their own business.

"Had you ever heard of Big Rigs?" Fox asked.

"No, what is it?" Marth questioned.

Fox and Falco looked at each for a split second and snickered. "You'll see." Falco answered.

On his laptop, Fox clicked on a tiny icon and opened a new window that showed the title screen of a racing game. Once when he clicked "start", it immediately showed a poorly-made racing game. The car, which was a truck, looked like it was completely made of cardboard. The graphics resembled those of an Atari Jaguar game's.

"Watch this." Fox smirked, trying to hold in his laughter as he pressed the up button in his keyboard.

Without warning, the truck suddenly sped forward in a blink of an eye. It zoomed into a stop sign, however due to poor, inexperienced programming, the car strangely drove *through* the obstacle. It continued to accelerate at a constant rate, despite the terrane and other obstacles, such as buildings. The only sound effect in the game was the truck's rumbling engine.

"What the...?" Ike asked as he began to chuckle loudly.

"Who made this?!" Marth giggled hysterically.

"You think that's fast?" Fox asked, smirking under his breathe. "Wait until you go in reverse!"

"Lemme try!" Marth begged childishly.

"Be our guest!" Fox replied as he allowed Marth to play with the glitchy, broken game.

Shaking her head at the boys, who were chortling quite loudly and drawing unwanted attention from the other patrons, Zelda immediately continued making pizzas and tried to ignore them. Boys... She would never get them... Being a female, she found it hard to understand their thought processes, likes, and dislikes. In the meantime, she took off her shimmering, faux-gold, hairband; which resembled a wreath of leaves with a diamond-shaped, blue jewel, and brushed her chocolate hair out of her face. Distracted with work, she forgot to put the hairband back on. Her brain, the main processing center for memory, accidentally pressed the delete button.

"Hey Zelda, if you need anything, let me know, ok?" Link suddenly spoke with a smile.

"Y-Yeah...!" Zelda quickly responded, not knowing that she sounded a tad rude.

"Okay then..." Link replied to himself as he turned around and continued to work. What was with Zelda and men? She must have had a terrible experience with a few members of his gender.

Another two hours passed, marking the end of Link's and Zelda's working shift. Looking behind her back a couple of times at Link, who was texting to his stepfather, Zelda hastily packed her belongings into her pure white, leather purse—phone, Chapstick, makeup, and a small bottle of water. Before leaving, she took a quick, suspicious glance at Link. Was he paying any attention to her? Sure that he was not watching her, Zelda immediately exited the kitchen. Finally, she did not need to spend another moment with a boy!

Just as when Zelda was a few steps away from the exit, Link suddenly shouted, "Hey Zelda, w-wait!" He hurried towards the brunette with something glistering in his hands.

Zelda sighed in frustration. So close... "What is it?" she asked as she opened the door, holding it open for Link.

Both Link and Zelda left the building. Once when they were outside, Link showed Zelda the shining object in his hands. It was her hairband.

"You forgot this." Link explained as he gave the hair accessory to Zelda. "I saw it lyin' on the counter. I have the day off tomorrow and Saturday and I don't want to wait until Sunday!"

"Oh, well... Thank you, Link." Zelda thanked as she carefully set the hairband back onto her head.

Link warily looked around. He noticed the once-blue sky turning into a smear of purple, yellow, orange, and red as the spherical, bright sun slowly sank into the shadowy, dark buildings.

"It's gettin' dark." he commented. "Are you drivin', or walkin' home?"

"Even though I have a license, I walk here." Zelda answered. "The joint is not far from my house, so I don't want to waste gas."

"I don't think it's safe for you to walk back alone. I'll walk with you." Link offered.

"No, you don't have to." Zelda flinched at Link's generous offer. "My house's just a few blocks away."

"Still, anything can happen." Link sternly stated. "I don't want anything to happen to you. Where do you live?"

Zelda pointed down the street; the same street that led to Link's neighborhood. "My neighborhood is located a few blocks away."

"Same here." Link replied. "We're goin' the same direction. C'mon, let's go!"

Looking around warily, Link guided Zelda down the streets like a protective knight in shining armor guarding his beloved princess. Although she kept a stoic, deadpan expression, Zelda was a bit astonished by Link's actions. Maybe this guy was different from the others...

"Um, Link?" Zelda unsurely spoke up. "Thanks for... Walking me home tonight."

"No problem!" Link responded coolly.

"A guy never did something like this before." Zelda sighed as she remembered stressful, frustrating memories. "The ones I met only see me as an object."

"How?" Link asked. "Did they..." Link paused awkwardly. He did not want to say the word.

Luckily, Zelda caught Link's question. "No, nothing like that! However, I had some incidents."

"Like what?" Link was beginning to see where this conversation was going.

"The usual drama." Zelda explained as the two turned a corner. "One guy and I got together, only to have him drop me for another girl. Another guy tried to gain compete control over me. Apparently, he wanted a girl as dumb as a rock. There was even a guy who was so obsessed with me, he stalked me!"

"Oh..." Link nodded in understanding. "Well, just to let ya know, not all guys are like that, ok?"

Zelda smiled and gave a playful nudge on Link's shoulder, causing him to jump. "Don't worry, I know that now."

Link blushed slightly and scratched the back of his head in embarrassment.

"We're here." Zelda said as she and Link approached an average-sized apartment. "Thanks for walking with me, Link! Are you sure you can walk back on your own?"

"Yeah, I can fend for myself!" Link assured calmly. "Are ya gonna work tomorrow?"

"Probably." Zelda answered as she walked up the steps, towards the entrance of the apartment. "Why do you ask?"

"I'm thinkin' of comin' over for lunch. That's all." Link swallowed nervously as said that sentence.

"That's nice! I'll see you tomorrow!" Zelda finished as she entered the apartment complex.

"See ya!" Link called.

After when Zelda left, Link began to hurry back to his neighborhood. The sun was completely beneath the now pitch-black buildings. Without a source of gold light, the sky was now a murky mess of dark blue, indigo, and violet. The cars' bright headlights were quick streaks across the streets, which were illuminated by the tall, glowing streetlights.

"I better get home quickly." Link said to himself as he rushed down the sidewalk. "My family must be worried 'bout me."

As he turned the corner, Link suddenly felt a funny feeling in his stomach. No, it was not full of nerve-wrecking butterflies nor twisting in pain due to sickness. It was a bit heard to describe. What was it? Link began to ponder as he finally reached the doorstep of his house, reached his hand into his pant pocket for the house key, and unlocked the door.

"Nah, it can't be love." he thought to himself. *"It's just an infatuation. Nothin' to worry 'bout!"*

Author's Notes: What is love? Baby don't hurt me...

Finally, I managed to upload chapter 15! Sorry for the late-ish update. I got carried away with my break, sport, and homework. Right now, I think the story is about half-way done, so hang on! Also, I'm trying to revive my "Price of Respect" fanfic, so check it out when it's updated!

BTW, Big Rigs is an actual game; my friends at school showed me and it made me laugh so hard. Yes, it was that bad! I suggest you to check out the Big Rigs review by the AVGN for the craps and giggles.

Story Questions:

Do you think Marth is starting to befriend Ike?

What traits do you look for in your other half (hustband/wife)?

Any suggestions on how the aslyum learn that Marth is still alive? (I hope this isn't a spoiler question!)

Chapter 16: Chapter 16

Roy was sitting on his bed, browsing through some images on his phone and trying to decide which one should he draw on the art festival. He did not have a lot of time to think and decide! The festival was in two days!

What should he draw? Should he draw something familiar, recognizable, and popular? If he did, the audience would probably love it, since it was a drawing of what they liked. But, wouldn't it a bit boring? People would only like it for the subject, not how well the picture was drawn. Maybe he should draw something obscure yet unique. But, people would just walk pass it, as it was not something they know about.

"Hey Marth, can you come over here?" Roy requested.

Marth, who was lying on his stomach on the floor and reading a small picture book, got up and went towards the redhead. "What is it, Woy?"

Roy showed Marth a picture on his phone. It depicted a simple drawing of a Pikachu and a Jigglypuff playing a trumpet and a saxophone. "Do you think we should draw this picture?"

"Erm..." Marth thought for a few minutes. "I know that Pikachu and Jigglypuff are really popular characters, but I think the drawing is too simple and easy to draw."

"Ok..." Roy then flipped to another image, which depicted a detailed photograph of green and purple grapes, and a glass of wine. "How about this one?"

"I think it's too detailed and complicated to draw." Marth admitted. "However, if we manage to draw it well, it'll really impress people!"

Roy sighed loudly in frustration. It was hard for him to make decisions...

"Woy, are you ok?" Marth asked worriedly. "Are you angry at me?"

"No." Roy answered with a reassuring smile. "It's just that, I find it really hard to decide which drawing should I do..."

"Why don't you do these really colorful, funny drawings that don't really depict a central subject?" Marth hoped that Roy knew what he was trying to suggest.

"You mean abstract art?" Roy replied.

"Yeah!" Marth bubbly clarified.

Roy typed "abstract art" into the search engine in his phone and began to browse through the colorful, unique images. He spotted a painting that consisted of geometric angles and shapes. No, too mathematical. Roy then noticed a deformed, colorful portrait of a lady. No, too weird! It looked like the canvas got attacked by a monster armed with paint!

"Hey, how about this one?" Marth suggested, pointing to a colorful, abstract drawing. It depicted a few musical instruments, such as a saxophone, piano, and violin.

"That looks nice!" Roy remarked as he saved the image. "I'll print it out tomorrow!"

"I think it's easy to draw!" Marth added. "I mean, it isn't really detailed!"

Roy changed the subject. "So, how's the job at the pizza joint?" he asked.

"It's going good so far!" Marth answered with a smile. "I met a lot of friends!"

"Like who?"

"Do you know Fox and Falco?" Marth asked before he continued.

"I think so." Roy replied, remembering the duo. "They are above my grade level, so I don't really talk to them a lot. They sometimes hang out with me during lunch, though."

"They showed me this really bad computer game today!" Marth stated, remembering the failed racing game. "It's called Big Rigs!"

Roy blinked as he raised his brow. "Big Rigs? What...?"

"It's a really bad racing game!" Marth explained. "You can drive through stuff and drive off the game if you go in reverse!"

"Did they actually bring their laptop during work?" Roy asked curiously.

"They don't work there." Marth answered. "They just surf the Internet whole eating their pizza at the same time."

"Ok, if they did, I would wonder how they manage to keep their job." Roy commented with a small chuckle. "Who else did you meet?"

"You know the waitress with the brown hair and pointy ears?" Marth asked.

"I think I know who you're talking about!" Roy said. "I think Link really likes her!"

Marth giggled at the memory. "Yeah! Her name is Zelda!"

"How is she? Is she nice? She looked nice." Roy guessed.

"She's really quiet and doesn't like being around boys." Marth sighed. "But I think Link is making her open up!"

All of a sudden, Roy's phone vibrated and let out a loud chime. Jumping slightly, Roy quickly picked up the phone and read the received text message. That was a bit funny... People besides Pit and his father hardly send him messages.

"What is it?" Marth asked with wide, cat-like eyes that shimmered their curiosity.

"Link just sent me a message." Roy answered. "It seems to be urgent."

"What does it say?"

"It says, 'Roy, can I talk to you about something?'. I just told him sure."

"I want to see his reply!" Marth got onto Roy's bed and carefully scooted next to him, so he could read the messages. Roy's phone chimed again, indicating that Link's reply arrived.

"Ok, before I start, I want to ask you this: had you ever liked someone before?" Link message said.

Roy and Marth looked at each other before Roy replied, *"yeah, but the person i liked didnt return the favor."* They knew what the conversation was going to be about.

"What did you do to let her know you liked her?" Link's message asked.

"straight up told her. tbh, I shouldve gotten her some flowers. Why are you asking me this?"

"I kinda like this girl, but she's afraid of men. I want to tell her that I like her without scaring her!"

"Let me guess, its the waitress in the joint." Roy and Marth smirked to themselves as Roy pressed the "send" button.

"Yeah, it is!"

Roy and Marth chortled loudly at Link's message.

"ok, ok. I get it. You like her and you dont know how to tell her, right?"

"Yeah... :("

"If you have enough $, you can give her some chocolates or flowers." Roy's message suggested.

"Ok, I got it. What if she rejects me? :S"

"Marth, Pit, and i are going to the joint for lunch, so we'll watch this play out. We got your back! Dont worry!"

"Thanks, Roy! I'll see you tomorrow! Goodnight!"

"goodnight." was the last message Roy sent to Link.

"Oooh!" Marth childishly exclaimed as he jumped off Roy's bed. "Link likes Zelda! Link likes Zelda! I hope Zelda likes him back!"

"Me too." Roy agreed. "It's kinda painful to get rejected."

"Did you like someone, Woy?" Marth nosily questioned.

"Yeah." Roy only replied.

"Who was it?"

"I don't really want to talk about it." Roy sighed unhappily.

"Oh, I'm sorry." Marth quietly apologized.

Roy wanted to change the subject, as he did not want to dive deeper into his depressing past. "So, you met Fox, Falco, and Zelda. Is that all?"

"No! I also befriended Ike!" Marth innocently said.

Roy froze in terror as hues slowly drained from his pale face. "I-Ike? You mean, the indigo-haired guy who has a bipolar disorder and lives across the street?! Please tell me that this is a different Ike!"

"He's the Ike with the indigo hair and bipolar disorder!" Marth bubbly clarified.

"How long have you been friends with him?!" Roy asked, panicking hysterically in the inside. No, this could not be true! Marth's personality did not match with Ike's personality! Likes do not attract unlike things!

"Since this morning! He walked with me to the joint and back!"

"Did he hit you so hard on the fucking head, that you don't remember that you're supposed to be fucking afraid of him?!" Roy screamed, unable to hold in his anguish.

Unbeknownst to the two teens, Eliwood was working in his office, trying to finish his work and secretly listening in to the conversation. "Language, Roy!" he called from his workplace.

Roy sighed in frustration at his father, an ordinary human who had the ears of a Hylian.

"Well, if he did, I'm glad!" Marth cheerfully replied. "It made me get to know him more! Woy, he's a nice person! Really!"

"Are you sure he's not plotting anything?" Roy sternly and carefully asked.

"I don't think so! To be honest, he seems really lonely like you when I first met you..." Marth's smile fell into a sad, sympathetic look.

"That's because people know he's dangerous!" Roy commented.

"I think so..." Marth huffed. "But, I think he just really wants some friends... Maybe he can spend time with us tomorrow! What do you think?"

"Does Ike know?" Roy asked grudgingly. To be honest, he did not want to spend time with his nemesis.

"Yeah! I told him as we were walking back home! He seemed really happy when I asked him!"

"Well..." Roy unsurely started. He was not sure if said yes. Of course, he did feel sorry for Ike when Marth mentioned that he was lonely. However, what if Ike was lying to the naïve, inexperienced Marth, who seemed to be sheltered from the outside world? What if Ike's true intention was to harmfully hurt Marth? Roy did not want that to happen! Marth suffering from his injuries and amnesia was enough for him!

But, what if Ike was actually lonely? What if we just wanted someone to spend time with? Before Marth appeared in his life, Roy was a social outcast in school nearly like Ike. The main differences were, Roy had Pit to turn to and he had depression, not a bipolar condition that constantly switched the on and off buttons of anger and happiness. It would be nice to be with Ike for a day, so he could learn more about him.

"... Sure, we can let Ike hang out with us tomorrow." Roy answered hesitantly.

"Yay! Thanks, Roy!" Marth replied happily.

"We need to get some sleep." Roy said as he set his phone away and turned off the lights. "It would suck if we fell asleep

in the middle of the day!"

Marth nodded as he got into his sleeping bag. As he snuggled against the soft cushions and cuddled the cotton, thick blanket, he suddenly said, "Woy, I have a question."

"What is it?" Roy asked.

"What does the word 'fucking' mean? You say that word a lot."

"It's a bad word that you should not say in front of anyone, especially my dad." Roy tried to hold in his laughter; it was the first time Marth cussed.

"Ok, I understand." Marth replied.

Author's Notes: Roy, watch your mouth! Marth might mimic your trash-talk!

Sorry for the slow update; school just started a week ago for me and already I'm swarmed with homework. Luckily, I might have more time later, as tennis season is going to end in two weeks. Hopefully, this chapter is long and worth waiting for, as it was originally part of a larger chapter. However, the large chapter is not finished, and I did not want to keep you guys waiting. So I made this part a separate chapter.

Also, I created a poll related to my fanfics. It's asking whether Shulk should be with Ike and the gang in the Smash Mansion fics. So if you hadn't already, check it out or leave your vote in your review if you're a guest!

Annoying story questions:

If you needed to draw street art like Roy, what would you draw?

So far, who is your favorite character and why?

What is your favorite chips to snack on? (I personally like Pringles, especially the pizza and cheese one. I used to like Hot Cheetos, but I can't eat spicy foods now.)

Chapter 17: Chapter 17

Shaking nervously, Pit and Roy uneasily followed Marth to the doorstep of the Greil's house. Ok, this was something they had never done before! Going to greet Ike Greil at his home, where they were no adults for them to run behind for protection! If they actually survived this, they should immediately scratch that off their bucket list!

"This is not how I want to go!" Pit said to Roy and Marth. "When I die and go to the other world, my ancestors are gonna be like, "Hey! Let's talk about how we died! I died in war! I died trying to kill an Ultimate Chimera to protect my family! How about you, Pit?" And I'll be like, 'I got killed by a bully in my neighborhood!'"

"Same here." Roy agreed, his voice shaking.

"It isn't that bad..." Marth tried to reassure as he uneasily knocked the door.

Hearing the sounds of knocking on wood was already nerve-wrecking enough for Roy and Pit. As soon as the door opened, the two cowardly hid behind Marth, waiting for the signal to flee.

Ike could only look at the two hiding behind Marth, who was trying his hardest to not show fear towards him. This was a bit awkward... Was he that scary?

"H...Hi, Ike!" Marth greeted in a soft, shaky voice.

Ike smiled, trying to calm the three visitors. "Hey, Marth. Er, what's with Roy and Pit?"

"They just want to say hi." Marth gave a sharp look at Pit and Roy and gently elbowed then.

"Ahh!" Pit squealed loudly. His voice echoed down the street, yet it was not loud enough to alarm the other neighbors. "Hello, I-Ike!"

"Hey, Ike." Roy forced a nervous smile.

"Do you guys need anything?" Ike asked.

"Well, we're asking if you want to hang out with us." Marth answered. His voice began to tremble. "Do you want to?"

"Sure! I just need to ask Mom, hold on." Ike turned around for a few seconds. "Hey Mom, I'm going to hang out with Marth, Roy, and Pit! Is that ok?"

"Yes, just be back before five thirty!" Was Elena's sign of approval.

Ike nodding, letting his mother know that he understood before editing the house and closing the door.

"So, what are we doing today?" he asked.

"Well, we're thinking of stopping by at the pizza joint for some lunch before going to the arcade." Roy explained, trying to hold his guard up. He still sensed that Ike was plotting an attack on him and his friends. "After the arcade, we will go home, since your mom wants you back by five thirty."

"That sounds like a good plan!" Ike remarked. "I'm up for it!"

"Do you still think he's plotting something?" Pit whispered in a low voice to Roy, as the four entered the joint.

"I'm not sure..." Roy responded softly, hoping Ike could not hear them. "We should still keep our guards up."

"Hey!" Ike suddenly said in a loud voice. "What are you guys talking about?"

"Shit!" Roy gasped before nervously smiling at Ike, trying not to make him suspicious. "Er, nothing!"

Ike doubtfully glared directly into Roy's eyes. "I saw some lips move... Aren't we friends? Friends don't talk behind each other's' backs!"

"Well..." Roy replied uneasily. Ike was beginning to scare him. His heart began to pump panicky as his alarmed brain quickly tried to form a response. "I think we are friends." he could only say.

Ike just silently nodded, leaving a chill in Pit's and Roy's back.

"Let's sit here." Pit said, guiding them to a table booth near the entrance. "What do you guys want?"

Roy and Marth stayed silent and waited for Ike to answer; they did not want to order something that he did not like and trigger his gun of rage.

"I'll have anything." Ike responded. "How about you guys?"

"Well..." Roy started unsurely, trying to come up with a decision. "I want pepperoni, olives, and meatballs. Is that all right with you guys?"

"It's ok." Marth replied.

"Fine with me." Pit assured. "I'll go order now!"

Pit left briefly to order their meal, leaving his three friends seated at their table. Roy made sure that he was sitting next to Marth. Although the sense of fear was slowly draining out of his veins, Roy quickly held the crumbling, shaking wall up. The back of his head warned him that Ike could do anything to him at any time.

"So..." Ike began, hoping to stir a conversation. It was a bit awkward just sitting with your friends in silence. "Are you guys going to the art fair tomorrow?" he asked.

"The art fair?!" Roy exclaimed. He swallowed nervously; he decided to tell the truth. "Well, yeah! I'm doing some street art with Marth!"

"Y-Yeah!" Marth added with a timid smile.

"Neat! I'm doing street art too!" Ike replied. Roy began to scream in panic internally. Great, he was stuck with Ike tomorrow! "Eh, do you want to see the picture I'm going to draw?"

"Sure! I want to see!" Marth answered with a shine in his curious eyes.

Ike turned his phone on and showed the image to Marth and Roy. It was an abstract, eye catching piece with bright hues, such as baby blue, lemon yellow, and blazing red. The work depicted a distorted person holding two masks— an angry mask and a crying mask. The person's face was not one of the prettiest things Roy and Marth had seen. His brown eyes, simple, chestnut brown dots, were cross-eyed and unsymmetrical. His smile was a swirly, wiggly black line. His skin was an unnatural peach color. A scribble of hues of blue and purple was his hair. In the middle of the man's face was a plain, black triangle, making Roy assume that it was the nose.

"What do you think?" Ike asked.

"It's kind of..." Roy paused before making the negative, rude remark.

"Let me guess, weird and ugly." Ike assumed.

"Yeah..." Marth agreed. "Why do you to draw this?"

Ike set his phone on the table and sighed softly. Through his narrow, cobalt eyes, Marth hinted that Ike was a bit sad. Same with Roy, who began to think that Ike was not terrible after all...

"I found this picture when I was browsing through the Internet." Ike explained gloomily. "I chose it because it was an artwork I could relate the most."

"Does it have something to do with your bipolar disorder?" Roy hesitantly asked.

"Yeah, it does." Ike concluded. "The drawing tells me how some people express their feelings... That's what I interpret from this work."

Marth decided to speak up, as he desired changing the depressing subject. "So Ike, do you still feel better when you don't take those pills?"

Ike smiled at Marth; he was glad that the smaller bluenette asked the question. "Yes. I'm glad because I know that I don't need to rely on medicine to control my temper!"

"So, the medicine you were taking was supposed to make you less angry and whatnot, but it did the opposite instead?" Roy asked.

Ike laughed. "Yeah! It's really complicated!"

"I have a question, can I see some art similar to yours?" Marth asked with bright eyes. "They look really interesting!"

Roy gave Marth a funny look. "You really like the weird drawings?"

Marth gave Roy a childish pout in response. "Yeah, they are unique!"

Ike searched for some colorful, distorted images on his phone and gave it to Marth, who instantly began to skim through the erratic drawings. "Here ya go. What do you think?"

Roy looked over Marth's shoulder in effort to look at the images. Marth's eyes flickered like a flashlight when a particular painting caught his eyes. "I like this one!" he spoke as he tapped on the image, enlarging it so the others could see the details.

The painting was a picture of a young man sitting at the center of the canvas. Like the man in Ike's picture, he was depicted quite distorted and unnatural. His hair was a splash of grape purple, chilling indigo, deep sky blue, and a blazing red. A pair of navy-blue almonds were his eyes. The nose was a triangular mountain that marked the boundaries on the face. His mouth was a black line that spiraled downwards like a frown. The man was sitting by himself on the ground, surrounded by realistically-drawn, monotone people who had their back turned on him. If someone truly, understood art, he or she would know that it was not a happy picture.

"That's sad..." Roy commented before saying, "I want to draw the picture in the fair!"

"Really? I wanna draw it too!"Marth agreed bubbly.

"You want to help draw a depressing picture?" Roy asked in surprise. "You don't seem to be the type of person who could relate to it the most!"

"I don't know why, I just can relate to it!" Marth replied. "Do you still want to draw it?"

"Yeah, sure!" Roy clarified.

Pit suddenly arrived and sat down next to Ike. "I just made the order! It might be ready in ten minutes!"

"Great!" Marth replied cheerfully.

Just then, Link shakily opened the door and nervously entered the joint, making his for friends look at him. His face and ears were red from either nervousness, exhaustion from running from his house to the desired location nonstop, or embarrassment. Sitting in his trembling hands was a small box of chocolate and a single rose. The box was a luminous, gold color with a matching silk ribbon. The rose was freshly-picked, indicated by the tiny, cool dewdrops on its pure-white petals.

"Hi, Link!" Marth greeted.

"Oh! Hello y'all!" Link responded with a forced, shaky, somewhat scared smile. "How are ya?"

"We're good." Roy replied, a bit concerned with Link. "Are you ok? You look scared?"

Link went to his friend's table. "I'm just a tad nervous. I'm 'bout to tell Zelda that I like 'er!"

"What's with the chocolates and the flower?" Pit asked, a bit confused. "It looks like you trying to ask her to a dance!"

"Well, I brought those to convince 'er that I'm not that bad!" Link replied.

"Don't worry, I think you'll be ok!" Ike tried to reassure. "Just don't mess up and stay calm!"

Link noticed Zelda exiting the kitchen and spoke up anxiously. "Well, there she is... Should I talk to 'er now?"

"Go, Link!" Roy encouraged in a whispering voice. "Now's your chance! She might be on a break!"

"We got your back, don't worry!" Pit called.

Swallowing and trying to ignore the butterflies in his stomach, Link uneasily approached the brunette and tightly clutched the rose and the box of chocolate. He felt so nervous, he sensed that he was going to throw up at any minute. No, don't do that, Link! If you do that, Zelda might be disgusted and never talk to you again!

"Um, hey Zelda." Link shakily greeted, trying to hide his nervousness with a small smile. He hid the box and the flower behind his sweaty back.

"Hi, Link!" Zelda replied calmly. "What's going on? Do you need anything?"

"Well, I..." Link started anxiously. He began to panic hysterically in the inside. Shoot! What should he say?! Should he just give her the gifts and tell her he liked her or tell her that he liked her before giving the chocolates and the flowers?!

"Is there something wrong?" Zelda asked. This conversation was becoming a bit awkward.

"I just...want to give ya those gifts." Link finally said, giving her the box of chocolates and rose.

Zelda eyed them with curiosity. "Why?" she asked.

Link bit his bottom lip. "I want to show you that I really like you!" he exclaimed, not noticing how loud he was shouting. Most of the nosy patrons in the restaurant turned and looked at him. Was this guy confessing his love to his crush in public? That gotta take a lot of guts to do. Roy and his friends held their breath. Was she...?

"Gee, you did all of this just to say that you like me? You looked like you were asking me out to a date." Zelda remarked jokingly.

"I'm s-sorry 'bout that!" Link apologized, his face as red as a tomato. He felt his respect draining out of his veins, being replaced by embarrassment.

"Don't be, because you know what?" Zelda set her gifts onto the counter next to her and unexpectedly took Link into her arms, giving him a tight embrace. "I like you too."

Some of the customers said, "Awww..." under their breath while others just ignored them. Roy and his friends began to clap softly.

"Good job Link!" Marth blurted out. "I know that you can do it!"

"She said yes, right? That's great!" Roy's voice followed.

"Zelda, not here! Everyone's watchin'!" Link whispered in embarrassment to his crush.

Zelda gave Link a funny look. "You only have yourself to blame." she mischievously replied. "You should've confessed in the kitchen where no one is watching!"

"Well, that was fun, wasn't it?" Roy asked his three friends, as they were walking back to their neighborhood.

"The best part was when Link was telling Zelda he likes her!" Pit snickered with a loud chuckle. "He looked so embarrassed!"

"He must be very brave to do that!" Marth remarked. He looked down with a blush on his cheeks as he pretended to be in Link's shoes. "If I tried to do that, Zelda would probably reject me..."

"Marth, someday you will unexpectedly win a girl's heart." Roy replied. "Hopefully, you like her in return!'

Ike was walking slowly behind the three close friends, staying awfully silent. He did not say anything to add to the conversation.

Marth worriedly turned around and faced the dead-silent, indigo-haired teen. "Um, Ike? Are you ok? You're really quiet..."

"Oh, n-nothing!" Ike replied with a smile, which eventually fell to a deadpan expression. "It's just that, this is really weird."

"What's weird?" Roy asked, feeling the conversation turn around.

"After so many years, this is the first time I actually spent some time with friends." Ike frowned unhappily at the lonely, empty memories. "Before, I only had Mist and my parents. Everyone else just avoided me."

"Of course! You would get angry and take Roy's money!" Pit bluntly retorted.

Ike fiercely raised a brow at Pit, trying to keep his anger in check. C'mon, dont explode now! Now was not the time! Ike furiously grumbled to himself as he cringed, trying to pause the ticking bomb. Taking this as a warning, Pit stepped away

nervously. "I needed money for a good reason." he said.

"Was it for the pills?" Roy questioned. When he dug himself a wide, deep hole known as depression, his father Eliwood needed to pour chunks of money into it in order to fill it up.

"Kinda." Ike answered, swallowing nervously as the terrible, violent memory. "It was something I did."

"What happened?" Marth asked quietly.

Ike sighed miserably. "A year ago before school started, Dad and I went to the grocery store to get some food. When we were exiting the store and going back to our car, we bumped into one of Dad's coworker. I don't know why, but he had a big problem with Dad. I never liked him; that jerk always begs for money from Dad. They got into an argument and after a few minutes, the coworker punched Dad in the stomach. At that point, I got so pissed, I snapped and beat the crap out of him."

Roy, Marth, and Pit stayed silent as they turned a corner and entered their neighborhood. Was this the reason why workers from the asylum wanted to take Ike? Did it really take them a year to find Ike's whereabouts? Ike continued his tale.

"I cracked his arm and one of his ribs." he continued. "Before that happened, my family thought that my bipolar disorder wasn't bad. After that, my parents decided that I need medications. The medication made a large hole in Dad's salary. I felt really bad, so I decided to take other people's money during school to make it up for him. At that time, doctors considered me unable to hold a job due to my temper."

Roy nodded. No wonder why Ike bullied him for his lunch money... Some people do very strange, harmful things in order to satisfy their selfish needs or their loved one's need.

"Near the end of school, you suddenly stopped taking money from me. What happened?" Roy spoke up.

"Dad found out and stopped me." Ike answered. "That's what happened."

"Was he really upset?" Marth asked, beginning to feel sorry for Ike.

"Yeah, he was." Ike huffed. "He was pissed at me for using other people's money to buy the medicine for myself. Luckily, he softened when I told him why I did that and told me to get a job over the summer if I want to get some cash." Ike guiltily looked down when the group stopped in front of his house. "I can't believe after all I did to you guys, you guys still let me hang out with you guys." His voice quivered slightly as he blinked away a small tear.

"Well, now we know you better." Roy explained, trying to calm Ike. "So, we aren't as afraid of you as before. Thanks to Marth."

Marth bashfully looked away, refusing to make eye contact with his friends. So embarrassing...

"We're home now." Ike stated, looking around the neighborhood. "Roy and Marth, you guys are going to the art fair, right?"

"Yes, we are." Roy replied. "Isn't it at the wharf?"

"Yeah! Well, Dad's going to drive me there. Do you guys want a ride?"

"Sure!" Roy answered with a nod. "We can save a lot of time!"

"I'll let my Dad know." Ike said as he suddenly embraced Roy, Marth, and Pit at the same time. "Thanks for letting me hang out with you guys!"

Marth struggled to turn and hug Ike back. "Y-You're really welcome!" he replied.

As the old, experienced yet corrupt president of the asylum, Gharnef did not see the meeting room any different. It was a long, large rectangular room with an expensive, wooden table in the middle. Placed at the straight sides of the table was a row of matching, wooden chairs, each seating a high-ranked, important worker. Such workers included a gray-haired man who had a fascination with diamonds and wore silver, a dark-toned Gerudo with ginger hair who had an intimidating gaze in his hazel eyes, a woman with snow-white hair and heavy makeup dressed in a long, sleeveless dress, and a sinister-looking man with odd, colorfully-dyed hair and garbed in a contrasting, strange, purple and red overcoat who were chatting with their coworkers.

Usually, the members would gather here during break and chitchat leisurely about their day. However, this time it was different. They were having a meeting. A meeting about an actual issue. The issue was related to money.

Now, some would ask, why would there be an issue involved with money among those high-ranked, wealthy individuals? They had enough to supply themselves! Like for most people, enough was not enough. They wanted more money from the government. Ever since that *escape* occurred about two months ago, their paycheck depleted about fifty percent! They needed to discuss a way to raise it back up!

"Have any of you come up with a plan to boost our finances?" Gharnef suddenly

There was a complete moment of silence. Each of the workers awkwardly looked at each other, waiting for their partner to speak up.

"Well, we need to find a replacement for that Masked Slasher." Hades spoke up. "When he took a plunge into the sea, so did our paycheck." he joked. His statement was followed by a mixture of chortles or groans.

"I say we need to find another psychotic killer like the Slasher." Ghirahim added. "The problem is, there isn't really a murderer purging through the bloody streets currently."

"How about snatching the forgotten orphans and homeless technique?" Ganondorf asked. "Is it working well? If so, we do not need to find an individual as unstable as the Masked Slasher!"

"It hasn't been working well." Aversa sighed. "Even though some legitimately have a disorder, they aren't extreme, so we are paid less."

Aversa's answer was followed by grumpy, concerned murmurs among her peers. So, if they cannot replace the now-deceased Masked Slasher with someone like him, or a bundle of people tied together, how could they gain more money?

"Wait, I got it!" Validar shouted, drawing everyone's attention towards him. "Why don't we accuse someone with a history of a violent disorder being just as dangerous as the Masked Slasher?"

"I like it!" Gharnef approved. "But, do we know anyone with such a history?"

Aversa giggled. "I think I know somebody... Does the name Ike sound familiar?"

Everyone gasped at the name and nodded.

"That indigo-haired teen with the bipolar disorder?" Hades asked to clarify, earning a nod from Aversa. "He has an uncontrollable temper that could crack some bones like jokes!"

Ignoring Hades' terrible jokes, Ganondorf spoke up. "Ike has a history of having violent encounters with others. He'll make a fine replacement for the Slasher."

"How are we going to get him?" Ghirahim asked. "His family is keeping a hawk's eyes on us. We cannot take a step towards him."

"We must watch his every step." Validar replied. "Sooner or later, he will be alone with no one by his side."

"So, in other words, we should follow Ike around and grab 'em at the right time." Hades restated. "Do we even know his whereabouts?"

"Some spies monitoring Ike reported that he will be participating in the art fair held at the wharf." Aversa giggled. "So adorable; he'll be doing some street art. This might be a chance to get our hands on him."

Yes, the plan seemed to be a detailed, accurate map to a hidden yet prosperous gold mine. Yet, a secret path to a larger, richer mine was never marked on the maps. Although it eventually vanished into time, that did not mean it was forgotten. It was a legendary, popular myth. Many assumed that the mine was buried underneath hundreds of pounds of diets, sand, and mud, forever lost.

Unbeknownst to men alike, the lost mine was simply across from the gold mine by a few, short feet.

Author's Note: I hope I portrayed the bad guys correctly, especially Hades's. *.*

Welp, here's chapter 17! This should clear Ike's relationship with his new friends and the asylum, so it should be

interesting.(?) I don't really have a lot to say about this chapter, so I'll just jump to the next part.

Judging by reviews and the poll, Shulk's definitely going to be with Ike and the others. Just to let you know, if something comes up, the Little Marth story might be delayed, as I really want to write a story about Shulk meeting the five. So, only time can tell what will happen...

Story Questions:

What are your favorite pizza toppings?

What do you think is going to happen during the art festival?

Chapter 18: Chapter 18

When it came to art, Roy preferred sitting in his room, at his desk with his sketchbook in front of him and the aid of his pencil and other pigments. It was convenient and comfortable for him. If he felt too hot or cold in his house, all he needed to do was to turn on the fan or put on a sweatshirt. If he needed a color pencil, boom! It was sitting in its pencil boxy long with its useful, erratic roommates. Hungry or thirsty? No problem! All Roy needed to do was to waltz down the stairs into the kitchen to get a drink, some snacks, or ask his father to make him something. Roy loved the comfort of his swirling chair. Although soft, it was firm, and was guaranteed to not leave joint or muscle pains in his body. Last but not least, Roy enjoyed his independence and free will to draw whatever he wanted.

However, doing street art for a fair was the complete, polar opposite.

Much to Roy's angst, the weather decided to not let him off easily on his artistic project and gave him with a blazing, bright day as a nasty gift. Yes, there was the shade provided by the palm trees and stores, but most of the artwork was being drawn on the boiling, black asphalt; the ground that seemed harmless to the naive eye, but painfully hot at the touch like lava. Although there were thousands of chalk pastel being provided by authorities, Roy knew that there were only so much pastel in the box and he needed to share with the other artists. Food was prominent in the wharf. Such foods included the every-day hamburgers and fries, fresh sushi, and ice cream. Yet, due to being in the center of a tourist attraction, the foods were awfully expensive. If the ground was a table, it wold stretch quite far to the point it would be difficult to make a single drawing. This fact forced Roy to squat or bend down in order to begin his drawing.

Even though Roy had the option to work alone, he allowed Marth help him. This provided him a large advantage and a disadvantage. Of course, the two could finish the drawing quicker, however, there was a small downside to this. Roy did not have Marth's taste and vice-versa.

"No, Marth! Don't use the black pastel yet!" Roy exclaimed in panic as Marth began to sketch the drawing with a pitch-black pastel. "If we make a mistake, we can't change it!"

Marth pouted as he obeyed Roy's orders and stopped. "But, the picture has black outlines..." he huffed.

"And that line isn't straight enough." Roy protested calmly back, pointed to a slightly curved line. "Look, if we rush through this drawing, it's not going to look good. Understand?"

"Yes, Woy..." Marth nodded unhappily.

Roy noticed Marth's disappointed expression, which made him soften a bit. Hey, don't be too hard on Marth! He was just trying to help! Trying to boost Marth's solemn mood, Roy suddenly gave him a large piece of white pastel.

"Why don't you color half of this picture after when we finish sketching the outlines?" Roy suggested, picking up a printed photo of the image and pointing to the right side of the image. "We can save a lot of time!"

"What if I mess up?" Marth unsurely asked. "I don't want to make the picture look really bad..."

"Don't worry, I'll fix it!" Roy reassured.

"Well..." Marth coyly paused for a few moments before giving Roy a small smile. "Ok! Let's do this!"

The two boys kneeled down on the asphalt, which had the same, boiling heat as an oven. In an effort of persistence, they each took a large, sponge-like object and set their bare, supporting left hand on its soft yet cool surface as they began to sketch the complicated, abstract drawing along with their peers.

"Woy, who's also here?" Marth suddenly asked as he wiped some sweat out of his brow.

"Let's see..." Roy looked up for a brief moment. Of course, there was Ike next to them trying to sketch his disfigured, nightmarish, yet symbolic and meaningful picture. He had to pause for a few moments, as he accidentally left out a tiny, yet important detail. Much to Roy's surprise, there was Fox and Falco. The Canidae and avian were drawing a musical abstract. It was a bit funny to Roy, as he always saw them as being interested in technology. In the distance, he could make out Toon with his new friends Ness and Lucas. After when the three adolescents heard of the art fair from Link, they dearly wanted to attend. Here, they were drawing a Xernes. Although they were not as experienced as the older teens, their artwork nearly looks exactly like the legendary Pokemon. Far away from him were four other people, individuals who Roy never met.

"There Ike, Fox, Falco, Toon, Toon's friends, and a few other people." Roy answered. "There isn't a lot of people."

"How come?" Marth asked.

"Maybe it's because street art is too exhausting and dirty." Roy shrugged his hands. "But to be honest, any art can be time consuming."

"Yeah..." Marth said as he looked up dizzily. He was beginning to lose his focus.

"Don't give up, ok?" Roy responded with an encouraging spark in his eyes. "We can't back up now!"

"Y-Yes!" Marth piped with a nod as he got back to work.

Looking at his colorful, smeared hand, Marth began to color the drawing's background while Roy added a few hues and mixed them together with his bare hands. Next to them, Ike finally managed to complete his complicated sketch and begin coloring his drawing. Much to the three teens' agony, the boiling temperature seemed jump from a hundred degrees to a thousand degrees. The palm of their hands were blistered with heat emitting from the pitch-black asphalt. Sweat began to soak through their clothes and hair. Their skin, which was either slightly tan or pale, turned completely dark or even a slightly painful light red, indicating a sunburn. Although they were wearing a visor or baseball cap to protect themselves from the blinding light, their eyes began to sting at the sight of the flamboyant colors, like looking at a phone screen in a dark room.

"Woy?" Marth weakly spoke up, looking at the redhead with an exhausted facial expression.

"Yeah?" Roy responded as he finished blending the colors with his stinging fingers.

"I feel tired..." Marth responded dizzily.

Judging by Marth's appearance, Roy could tell that the bluenette was dreadfully exhausted. His pale yet slightly tanned skin was a warm brown and slightly red, as he did not put on protective, soothing sunscreen. His face was red from extreme warmth and sweat that attempted to cool his body. The azure eyes flickered dimly as he tried to stay awake.

"Let's take a break." Roy suggested. He peered around and noticed that most of the other artists were gone. "The others are gone, so I think it's ok to stop for now."

"Ok!" Marth cheerfully replied as he set down his pastels and stood up. He adjusted his blue cap. "What are we gonna do?"

"Hold on." Roy said before calling to Ike. "Ike, do you want to take a break with us?"

"Err, sure!" Ike answered as he adjusted the bandana tied around his head. "It's pretty hot here and I want something to drink."

"What would you like to have? You can decide." Roy offered.

"Maybe something from that ice cream shop." Ike pointed to a tiny store that had the brand of a popular ice cream, which was located across of them. Because it was a hot day, people hurried into the shop. The sooner they got in, the sooner they would get their desired, sweet, icy treat! "I heard that they not only sell ice cream, but darn good pretzels too! What do you think? You like that?" Ike suggested.

"That sounds good!" Roy replied. Ice cream and pretzels sounded great to him. "How about you, Marth?"

"I like it!" Marth answered with a nod and a tired smile. "Just surprise me with anything! I want to try something new! I'm going to stay here and wait for you to come back, so no one will mess up our drawings when we're gone!"

"All right!" Ike said as he and Roy began to head towards the shop. "Now, because it's really crowded in there, we should eat outside in the shade. Hopefully, none of the benches are taken..." Ike told Roy.

As he began to wait for his two friends, Marth hurried into a nearby restroom, where he washed the black chalk off his filthy skin. Much to his relief, the cold water did not make his burnt skin sting, which meant that he did not have a terrible sunburn. After making an effort to wash the soot off his face, Marth exited the restroom and continued to wait for his friends by their drawings.

Although most of the street art were not completed, people were already commenting on them. Most of the attention were driven towards Toon's and his friends' artwork, as Xernes was a recognizable icon. Yet, even though his, Roy's and Ike's did not make any sense and confused the younger children, its hidden meaning and eye-catching colors impressed the

older audience.

"Hey, I really like this drawing!" a black-haired woman told her boyfriend as they walked by. "What do you think, Mac?"

Mac, a man who had the appearance of a wrestler or a boxer paused and took a quick glance at Marth's and Roy's chalk art. "I like it too!" he remarked before continuing his way.

Marth tried to not look at the couple and draw attention to himself, as he was not used to abrupt, unexpected compliments. Also, because Roy was not with him, people would assume that he entirely did the artwork all by himself, which made him look and feel like a phony.

"Pi-Pikachu!" a certain, yellow, mouse Pokemon exclaimed in amazement as he scurried towards the drawing and began to admire it.

"What is it, Pikachu?" a ten-year-old boy wearing red asked, before gasping. "Woah... That's a pretty good drawing! Can I take a picture of it?"

Marth jumped and began to blush madly. "S-Sure!" he answered shyly. "Thank you! My friend and I worked really hard on it! L-Look at the other drawings too!"

"No problem!" Red replied as he took a quick picture with his phone before admiring the other drawings. With a large smile, Pikachu scurried up Red's back and sat on his shoulder, so he could get a better view of the images.

Fiddling with his fingers, Marth was debating whether if he should continue staying near the artworks. The comments given by the passing strangers were beginning to make him a bit embarrassed and uncomfortable. Maybe he should go into the ice cream shop and meet with Ike and Roy... Marth glanced at this shop and noticed Ike and Roy still waiting in line. No, it would take too long... Besides, Marth did not want someone to sabotage the drawings.

"So, where do we submit the drawings?" a certain, familiar voice asked loudly from the distance.

Marth flinched and looked at the source of the obnoxious voice. To many people, the voice came from a human being. To Marth however, the voice came from a horrifying, ruthless monster.

Lilina pointed to a rented building that displayed hundreds of wondrous art pieces of all styles and mediums. It was located in front of Ike's drawing. "Over there. Hey, why don't we look at those street arts first?"

"Yeah, sure." Wolt answered. In his hands was a rushed, cartoonish drawing shielded by a picture frame.

The couple began to walk alongside the drawings. Due to no boundaries on how close the viewers could get, they could get as close to the drawings as they want to. Marth looked away and tried not to make eye contact with them, hoping that they would not notice him. He dreaded having a conversation with those two.

"Look at that Xernes picture!" Wolt pointed out. "Isn't it great?"

"Not as great as your drawing." Lilina replied as she took Wolt's drawing and began to quote the written text in the work. "Gotta go fast! I need to show you my moves!"

"Prepare yourself! I challenge my fate, as anything can change!" Wolt finished the quote in a booming voice, drawing strange looks and annoyed facial expressions from a few passerbys. As they softly laughed to themselves, Lilina gave her lover's drawing back, Wolt tossed his arms around Lilina's shoulders, and the two continued their way.

Wolt and Lilina did not make any more comments on the drawings. As they got closer, Marth was about to hurry away to safety when the two suddenly stopped at Ike's drawing.

"What the heck...?!" Lilina exclaimed obnoxiously as she and Wolt began to laugh hysterically. "Oh, Naga! That's terrifying!" she shouted in between giggles.

"That looks like it was drawn by a three-year-old!" Wolt rudely remarked. "Look at the hands! It looks like a baby's hands!"

A shot of anger struck Marth's heart. Hey, they could not just disrespectfully look down at someone's work! Ike spent a lot of effort, pain, and time on it! His brows lowering and his cerulean eyes narrowing into a sharp glare, Marth furiously stomped towards the couples without thinking carefully about his actions.

"S-Stop it!" Marth exclaimed, causing the couple to silence.

Wolt gave Marth a leering glower, sending Marth back into reality. Marth's enraged expression immediately softened into

a terrified look, figuring out the situation he was in.

"Oh, it's you." Wolt spoke.

"Y-Yeah, it's me!" Marth nervously stammered. Trying to put on a brave face, Marth sternly yet shakily ordered, "D-Don't laugh at that d-d-drawing again."

"Oh, why?" Lilina asked. "Did you happen to draw it?"

"N-No!" Marth answered uneasily. "My friend Ike did! Roy and I worked on the one next to it!" Marth gasped loudly at his sentence and covered his mouth in panic. Too late, they already know!

"Oh, that thing?" Wolt asked snobbishly. "What was Roy on?"

"Seriously, if he's still teaching you to draw, you should drop him and ask Wolt for help." Lilina said as she went towards the artwork and suddenly began to smear the colors and black outlines together, ruining the drawing.

"Hey, stop it!" Marth yelled in alarm. He was not sure what to do. Should he run for help, or physically stop Lilina? Completely panicked, he continued to scream hysterically. "You're ruining our hard work! Don't do that! Please!"

"Oh, just shut up!" Wolt suddenly yelled. He swiped Marth's blue baseball cap off his head and violently threw it down onto the dirty ground in front of Marth's feet. Marth's eyes began to widen quickly as tears began to fill his eyes and roll down his face. "Jeez, people like you need to be more quiet and keep to themselves!"

All of a sudden, a dirty tennis shoe struck Wolt in the back. With a, "What the fuck?", Wolt turned around. His green eyes met with the furious, intimidating glare in Roy's large, navy-blue eyes. Lilina hurried by Wolt's side, ready to stand for him in case anything happened. Roy leered at the dirtied drawing and at Marth, who could only helplessly watch in silence.

"Don't..." Roy growled. "DON'T MAKE MARTH CRY!" he screamed in fury.

Marth jumped in fright; he had never seen Roy so angry before. He thought that he was going to yell at Wolt and Lilina for laughing and ruining the drawing.

"Dude, everything's ok." Wolt tried to reassure in nervousness. "I just had a rough day, and I accidentally took it on Marth."

"Accidentally?!" Roy shouted in response. "Don't try to fool me, I'm not the idiot you and Lilina manipulated last year in school! I saw everything! This friending aren't friends anymore!"

"Not friends?!" Lilina exclaimed in shock. "Hey, we didn't mean to leave you out. Its just that you were so quiet, that we thought everything was ok! You don't need to hold it in. If there's something wrong, just let us know, ok?"

"Nice try." Roy sarcastically sneered. He saw through his ex-friend's manipulation. "That's fucking bullshit! After all the shit you out me through, I don't think we're on good terms. You guys burned the bridge a long time ago!"

"Maybe you're the one who burned it!" Wolt retorted as he suddenly pushed Roy, who did not fall onto the ground, but staggered a bit.

"W-Woy!" Marth cried out, covering his eyes in fear.

Ike, who just left the ice cream shop carrying a take-out box with cups of ice cream and mini pretzels, noticed the dramatic commotion. Without wasting a single minute and keeping his anger in check, he hurried towards the scene. The food sitting on the tray rattled and bounced with every step.

"Hey, stop this." Ike strictly said as he approached Wolt.

Wolt suddenly swung his fist and struck the box held in Ike's hands, sending it and its contents flying into the distance. "You stay out of this— Oh shit..."

His rage suddenly flying over its boiling point along with his senses, Ike viciously stared at the couple. Without even thinking about the consequences, the bluenette pulled his large fists back and swung it at Wolt's face.

"No, Ike!"

Ike's eyes widened in surprise as a sudden force grabbed his arms, preventing his fist from striking the intended target. He noticed Marth by his side, tightly clutching his arm with an iron grip.

Snapping out of his fury, Ike could only say, "Marth..."

"Let's go." Wolt said to Lilina quickly. With a nod, the two hurriedly away from the three and rushed into the art building.

Roy's harsh expression softened when he noticed Marth shakily releasing Ike's arm. "Marth, come here."

"Woy, I tried to make them stop..." Marth softly said as he went to Roy, who tightly embraced him.

"It's ok." Roy reassured. "Those jerks are gone now, it's ok..."

Ike looked at the ice cream and pretzels scattered throughout the ground. "Well, looks like our break time is gone, darn it..."

At that moment, Eliwood and Lyn got out of their car. It has been about four hours since Roy and Marth left for the art fair. The married couple would like to see how they were doing. As Eliwood locked his car, he asked, "Lyn, do you see the boys anywhere?"

"Let's see..." Lyn scouted the area, before notching three teenage males near the front of the art gallery. "I see them! Let's check them out!"

After cautiously crossing the streets, which were filled with careless drivers, Eliwood and Lyn approached the teens, who were still a bit shaken from the commotion.

"Roy, how's everything?" Eliwood asked.

"Oh, Dad!" Roy exclaimed in surprise as he released Marth. "Mom! What are you guys doing here?"

"We're just checking on you." Lyn responded. "Also, we need some images for work. How's your drawing?"

"Well..." Roy glanced at the drawing. "Something just happened, that's all. Don't worry, we can fix it!"

"You three look really exhausted! Didn't you guys get something to eat?" Eliwood asked in concern.

"Yes, we did." Roy pointed to the discarded, wasted food on the ground. "But, let's just say I tripped while carrying the food."

"Why don't you three take a break and let us get you some food and drinks?" Lyn offered. "You can't finish a drawing without energy!"

"Sure!" Roy answered with a large nod.

"Thank you!" Marth softly thanked.

"Thanks, Mr. and Mrs. Pherae!" Ike politely said.

Unbeknownst to the five, a typical yet suspicious "couple" was cautiously strolling around the wharf, looking for a certain indigo-haired teen. As soon as they approached the site for the street art, they immediately halted and began to look around, hoping that no one suspected them.

"Do you see him?" Validar asked. "Do you see Ike?"

Aversa looked down the street and spotted Ike talking to his friends as Roy's parents walked away from them, looking for a good restaurant for a takeout. "I see him." she giggled. "So cute, he's spending time with his friends. What should we do next?"

A speck of a hue of blue caught Validar's eyes, drawing his attention to Marth. What the... He seemed familiar... Could it be...?

"Validar?" Aversa asked again.

"Oh! Well... Let's run back to the truck and radio the other members. We need them to surround the area where Ike is and wait for the perfect time to capture him." Validar answered with an evil grin.

After two more hours of coloring, drinking, and redoing, all of the volunteering artists finally completed their street art. While some of them were taking pictures of their finished works and uploading images onto the Internet, others slowly

gathered the used pastel and set them into their boxes for next time. The sun was beginning to set, marking the end of a great day of hardworking.

Although most of the artists were exhausted, that did not excuse them from the attention they got from passing shoppers, tourists, friends, and family members.

"Great job, boys!" Lyn complimented as she walked around, taking pictures of every single drawing on the streets.

"Thanks..." Roy sighed in tiredness as he looked at Marth. "Marth, we did a great job today!"

"Same to you, Woy!" Marth replied.

"Roy, may I tell you something?" Eliwood asked.

"Yeah, what is it?" Roy was curious. Usually, his father who simply and straightforwardly tell him without warning.

"I just want to say that you greatly improved in art." Eliwood stated with a warm smile.

"Why?" Roy asked with a raised eyebrow. To be honest, he did not make an effort o improve his art skills.

"You seem to have a better understanding in art." Eliwood explained. "Before, you would just draw nothing but anime and video characters, which in my opinion, a bit bland and boring. Your street art is something different."

"Really? Thanks, Dad!" Roy responded.

At that moment, Link and Zelda approached the three. "Hello, y'all!" Link greeted cheerfully. "How are ya?"

"Hey, Link!" Roy answered. "I'm tired, but doing great!"

"Same here." Marth responded quietly. "Why are you here?"

"We just want to take a quick look at the artworks before picking up Toon and the others." Zelda stated. "That's all."

"I thought you were dating..." Marth innocently spoke up.

"Er no, we aren't." Link calmly replied, feeling his face heat up. "We are just spendin' time together."

"Then why are you holding Zelda's hand?" Marth pointed out.

Both Link and Zelda looked down and gasped in shock; they were unintentionally holding their partner's hands. Blushing furiously in humiliation, the two Hylians quickly let go in panic.

"Well, we were walkin' across the street." Link tried to lie. "Gotta keep each other safe!"

"I think Toon and his friends are ready." Zelda said uneasily, trying to find a way to escape the awkward conversation. "We need to go now! See you at work, Marth!"

Link nodded along with Zelda's successful plan and the two hurried away.

"See you guys later!" Roy called.

"I think Link really likes Zelda!" Marth childishly giggled.

Ike unsurely approached Eliwood. "Mr. Pherae, may I ask you something?"

"Sure, what is it?" Eliwood replied. "Is there something wrong?"

"My parents are really busy and they can't pick me up now." Ike explained his dilemma. "Is it ok if I can have a ride back home?"

"No problem!" Eliwood reassured. "You just need to wait for a while, Lyn is taking a few pictures. Do you mind waiting in the car?"

"No, I don't." Ike answered.

Eliwood fumbled in his right pant pocket, took out his car keys, and gave it to Roy. "Roy, the car is across the street, in front of the video game store. Do you understand?"

"Yes, we'll wait for you there!" Roy concluded before turning to his friends. "Follow me guys."

While the three walked down the sidewalk towards the video game store, Marth spoke up.

"Hey guys, I'll race you to the car!" he mischievously and playfully exclaimed before taking off.

"Marth, no!" Roy shouted in panic. "The street is crowded! There are a lot of cars! Wait up!"

Marth laughed cheerfully as he carelessly dashed across the street. The red traffic light was what prevented him from meeting his untimely demise. Marth carefully kept his eyes on Ike and Roy and waited for them to catch up, his cerulean eyes sparkled in joy and his face flushed with colors and life.

Just as when Roy and Ike ran across the street, Marth suddenly took off and began to dash down the other side of street, where the video game store was located.

"You can't beat me~!" he cried out, not noticing a certain, dark truck make a turn.

"Marth, NO!" Roy screamed in horror.

The sound of tires screeching caused Roy's heart to freeze in terror. Oh Arceus, was Marth hit? His stomach flip-flopped as a blur of blue was jolted away from the car. Much to Marth's luck and Roy's relief, Ike managed to get to Marth and pull him out of the truck's way just in time!

"Marth, are you ok?!" Roy asked panicky, rushing to Marth's side. "Marth?"

Although he managed to escape his catastrophe by a split second and sustained no physical injuries, Marth was mentally scarred in the inside. He had just escaped a death trap! Yet, for a mysterious reason, he felt something familiar tingling in the far reaches of his brain. Was could it be? A distant memory? Why was this so familiar like his nightmare? As he began to wonder, Marth trembled violently in Ike's arms.

"Marth?" Roy asked again.

"I... I'm ok." Marth uneasily said his eyes wide with fright and dull with dread.

Taking Marth's answer as truth, Ike carefully released Marth, who unsteadily stood up.

"Are you sure? You don't sound good." Roy doubtfully added.

"I think he's just shaken, that's all." Ike said in an effort to calm his friends. "C'mon, let's go."

With a small nod, the three continued their short journey to Eliwood's car, not bothering to look at the drivers of the truck.

"Blast it!" Ghirahim exclaimed in frustration, "We almost the boy! Do you know how that makes me feel inside? Furious! Outraged! Sick with anger! If it weren't for that blue-haired brat, we could've got him!"

"Hold on, doesn't that blue-haired boy seem familiar?" Ganondorf asked.

"Now that you pointed that out, he does look like someone I knew before." Ghirahim said. "We need to get a close look."

Hoping to not look suspicious, Ganondorf carefully turned the car left and began to trail the three boys. There, they managed to catch a glimpse Marth entering the car with Roy and Ike. Not wanting one of the boys to notice them, Ganondorf swiftly drove away and parked at a nearby parking space.

"That... That boy looks like the Masked Slasher!" Ghirahim gasped. "What if he's **actually** the Masked Slasher?!"

"Impossible." Ganondorf scoffed. "The Masked Slasher was hit by a truck and killed during his failed escape. It can't be him!"

"There can be a tiny chance." Ghirahim retorted calmly. "Still, the boy does look like the Masked Slasher, am I right?"

"Yes, is there a plan forming in your mind?"

Ghirahim smiled wickedly at his idea. "If we capture the little blue-haired boy and bring him back to the asylum, we can make a claim that the Masked Slasher managed to survive! We can increase our payment more than if he got Ike!"

"If so, we must alert the asylum as soon as possible." Ganondorf replied as he silently watched Marth, who was timidly

talking to his friends in the car, unaware of the danger he was in.

Author's Notes: Cliffhanger? *runs away from zombies*

Ok, this ought to be one of the longest chapters I've ever written, so I hope you guys liked the chapter! Also, I know that it does have some typos; thanks for letting me know, review! TBH, I usually edit the larger errors on Word and then upload them; I usually don't reread the chapter for errors, so you can blame my laziness! Also, tennis season recently ended, which means more time for me to finish homework and maybe a little more time to write chapters.

Story Questions:

What is your favorite material to use in art? (Ex: Pencils, markers, digital programs) I enjoy using pencils, pastels, markers, pens, and Photoshop.

What do you think is the best kind of friend? The worst kind? I personally like friends I can relate to and don't like the egotistical, selfish "ones".

How do you think the asylum should capture Marth?

Chapter 19: Chapter 19

When the asylum learned of the Masked Slasher's survival, their first reaction was pure astonishment. They began to question, how did he endure the fatal accident? He was shot, hit by truck, and thrown off a bridge! Did he survive via a skillful tactic they did not know off? Were they seeing things? Did the infamous killer actually got out of the truck's way and stealthily snuck away? Was his life sitting on the shoulders of luck during the whole incident?

This led to the debate whether the azure-haired teen was actually the Masked Slasher himself or a lookalike. The majority of the workers believed that the boy simply looked identical to the notorious murderer. Judging by Ghirahim's and Ganondorf's report, the teenager acted like boys of his age; spending time with his friends without the bloody intention to kill. A few, obsolete men who thought the boy was the Slasher argued that the suspect was a terrific actor with a dark intent in his mind, only to be retorted with logical statements. If the Masked Slasher did survive, he would have already murdered several people in the past months.

Gharnef was part of the tiny group of people who truly believed that the bluenette Ghirahim and Ganondorf found at the wharf was the Masked Slasher. For him, in order to tell whether the boy was certainly a blood-thirsty killer or an innocent citizen of Smashville, the suspect had to be brought to hims.

Although eight years had passed since he saw the Masked Slasher, Gharnef remembered every single physical detail of the psychotic murderer. He recalled lifting the infamous mask off the boy's face, his dark eyes immediately meeting cerulean orbs wide with anger and vengeance. Although blue eyes usually symbolized innocence, the Masked Slasher's orbs represented corruption. His light skin and azure bangs gave him the appearance of a child, whose life completely drove down the wrong path.

Because he dearly desired money and he wanted to see whether or not the Masked Slasher was alive, Gharnef ordered all of the workers of the asylum to patrol all areas in Smashburg, so they could learn the blue-haired male's location.

"Here's your order, Fox and Falco!" Marth sweetly spoke to the Canidae and avian as he set their order— a cheese pizza with ham and peppers of all colors and sizes, onto their table.

"Thanks a lot, Marth!" Fox thanked as he took a slice and set it onto his plate to cool. "Good job on your drawing by the way!"

Marth madly blushed and timidly looked away. "Gee... You know that I helped Roy draw it, right?"

"Don't worry, we know!" Falco reassured. "Tell Roy that he did an awesome job, ok?"

"I will!" Marth called back as he began to walk back to the kitchen.

Once when Marth entered the kitchen, the first thing he noticed was his friends Link and Zelda. While Zelda was busily making a small pizza, Link was strangely not working; he was writing in a small, black notebook. Marth was a tad confused and curious. He viewed Link as someone who always set his job as one of his job priorities.

"Link, what are you doing?" Marth asked.

"I'm just writin' about my job in my diary." Link answered as he glanced around the kitchen, so he could describe the surroundings. "That way, when I'm older, I can take a look back in this book and remember the past."

"That's nice." Marth's interested expression slowly turned into a mischievous, naughty grin. "Did you write about Zelda?" he softly teased, trying to hold his giggles.

Link's ears turned into a rosy pink along with his face. "N-No! It says nothin' about it!"

"You're lying!" Marth giggled.

"Instead of arguing about writing about me in a diary," Zelda began as she turned and faced the boys with a stern expression. "Why don't you two go back to work?"

Marth and Link jumped; they had never seen Zelda strictly talk to them. Usually she would ignore their antics.

"Y-Yes, Zelda!" Link replied quickly as he scrambled to go back to work.

Marth just nodded and quickly went to the oven.

At that moment, three college students entered the restaurant. The first student was a green-haired male with emerald

eyes and an average build. He was dressed in a navy sweatshirt, jeans, and white tennis shoes with a blue stripe. Sitting on his nose and eyes was a pair of glasses. If a little child were to look at him, he would jump to the conclusion that he was a brilliant scientist.

The second student was a young woman with aqua, long hair and blue eyes that nearly resembled blueberries. She wore a red tank top underneath a jean jacket, which matched with her jean skirt, dark brown tights, and white slippers. Despite her youthful, sassy appearance, she was actually quite cunning and friendly.

The third student was an azure-haired woman with a mature gleam in her cerulean eyes. She wore a white, wool, light jacket over a red and purple shirt, jeans, and lavender shoes. Although it was seen as a bit childish to some people, placed on her head was a plastic tiara with a faux, blue aquamarine. Only those close to her know why she wore the "cheap" accessory.

"I'll pay this time." Elice offered.

"Are you sure?" Merric asked carefully. "Don't you want to save money for textbooks?"

"I think it'll be fine." Elice confirmed. "Besides, I heard that the local bookstore is having a sale."

Merric shrugged before seating himself at a table with his friend Caeda. "Whatever you say." he replied.

Shaking out of his daydream, Ike greeted, "Hello, what would you like today?"

"A medium pepperoni pizza please." Elice replied with a soft smile as she took her small wallet out of her white leather purse and took out some cash. She gave it to Ike, who counted the amount, put some into the clanging cash register, and handed the patron the change.

Meanwhile, Marth was impatiently pacing around the kitchen. Usually, he would be buried up to his neck with serving multiple orders to hundreds of patrons. Today however, there was not so much business. Maybe the usual customers got sick of pizza and stopped their binge, leaving Marth with no work to do. Of course, the meant he had free time, however it was a waste like pouring a small bucket of water on a blazing forest fire. Marth could not just waltz out of work!

"Why are you runnin' around the kitchen, Marth?" Limk asked, giving the bluenette a strange, funny look. "Are you scared of somethin'?"

"I'm just so bored..." Marth signed.

Holding a newly-made, uncooked pepperoni pizza in an average-sized tray, Link cautiously opened an oven and loaded the raw food into it. "Well, here's somethin' to do in 'bout ten minutes!" he said, slamming the oven's door shut with a loud bang.

Marth nodded as his face turned red in awkwardness.

After ten minutes, the oven dinged like a soft chime, indicating that the pizza was ready. Using a pair of thick, protective gloves, Marth cautiously took the food out and carried it out of the kitchen to dining area, where the patrons were seated.

"Let's see... Table number 27..." Marth said to himself as he looked for the table. Noticing the number on a circular table, he noticed Elice, Merric, and Caeda, strangers whom he never seen and met before. His face slightly turning pink, Marth began to approach them with their order, hoping not to look and sound shy.

"Ummm..." Marth quietly spoke up, making the three colleagues look up. "H-Here's your order..."

As soon as when Marth set the pizza onto the table, his elbow accidentally bumped into Elice's drink, causing it to spill its sweet contents and fall onto the floor. His face turning redder, Marth covered his face and exclaimed, "Eeeek! I'm sorry! I'll pick it up and refill it for you! I'm sorry!" When Marth hurriedly bent down, picked the cup up, and quickly got up, he clumsily slammed his head on the edge of the table, causing him to cry out in pain. Ike, who was standing at the counter and watching the chaotic scene, quickly covered his mouth and let out a muffled snicker. He was trying to not laugh uncontrollably at his friend's misfortune.

Elice, Merric, and Caeda chuckled at the bluenette's clumsiness. "It's fine, I'll get another drink." Elice reassured.

Marth's shoulders timidly rose as he got up to his feet. "...O...Ok..." he quietly replied, still feeling embarrassed. "Erm..." he began, feeling awfully coy and fearful.

"Do you need anything?" Caeda asked.

"I... I..." Marth swallowed uneasily. "Wh...What is y-your name?"

"Why do you ask?" Merric questioned. A waiter never asked him for his name.

"Well... You see..." Marth tried to explain, his eyes wandering nervously around the place. "I always want to know people so I can be friends with them!"

"That's sweet..." Elice remarked. Her comment made Marth looked down at his shoes in embarrassment.

"My name is Caeda." Caeda greeted with a quick wink. "These are my friends Merric and Elice."

"What is your name?" Elice asked.

Marth was about to answer, when Dedede abruptly stormed out of his office. "Hey, get back to work!" he yelled at the startled bluenette.

"O-Oh!" Marth cried out. He quickly turned to the three students and said, "I need to get back to work. I'll t-talk to you later!" With that he hurried back to the kitchen, trying to not make eye contact with his annoyed boss.

"He's so cute..." Caeda commented, turning to Merric. "Isn't he?"

"He's awfully shy but nice." Merric remarked. He noticed a sad facial expression forming on Elice's face. "Elice, what's wrong?" he asked worriedly.

"The boy we just met..." Elice began in a sorrowful tone. "If he is still with us, he would be around his age..."

"Oh, you meant him." Caeda added with a remorseful expression. "The waiter shared some of his characteristics, don't you think?"

Elice sighed unhappily. "Yes. I miss him so much..."

Not wanting to see his girlfriend upset, Merric gently set his arm around Elice's shoulders. "I'm sorry..." he could only say.

"It's ok, you didn't do anything wrong." Elice replied, as she took off her plastic tiara and looked at it. Although it was considered to be cheap and worthless, the tiara actually worth a lot to Elice, as it carried fond memories.

"Oh yeah, I brought something for you!" Merric spoke up, hoping to brighten the mood. He reached into his large, sweatshirt pocket, took out a box, and gave it to Elice, who opened it curiously. Inside was a light-blue hairband encased with faux rhinestones.

Elice gasped. "Oh, it's so beautiful..." she remarked.

"I was shopping in the thrift store last week and I saw this hairband for sale." Merric told the long-haired bluenette. "I thought you would like it, so I brought it."

"I really like it!" Elice set her tiara on the chair next to her, put the hairband on her head, and gave Merric a hug with one of her arms. "Thank you!"

Unbeknownst to the college students, Marth was secretly watching the three from the corners of the kitchen. Even though he only knew her for a few minutes, he felt a ting of jealousy sting in his chest like a bee when he saw Merric lovingly cuddle Elice. Hey, what was his big deal!? He could not get that close to her! Marth was tempted to storm towards the two and shove Merric away. However, Marth knew his restrictions; he would get fired if he committed the ill-mannered act.

Although Marth never felt jealous before, the envious sting oddly felt familiar. Speaking of which, he had a feeling that he knew Elice somewhere before. But, when? She could not be responsible for his tragic accident, which left him helplessly without memories. She did not seem to be the type of person to brutally attack him and leave him on the beach for dead! Maybe he met her before he was attacked... As Marth began to ponder, his head began to ache as it struggled to find answers.

"Hey Marth, are ya starin' off into space?" Link suddenly asked. He was writing in his personal diary again.

"S-Sorry!" Marth replied, snapping out of his thoughts. He noticed the tiny book in Link's hands. "Link? Are you writing in that diary again?" Marth teased back.

"Gee! Sorry!" Link shouted loudly in embarrassment as he tossed his diary aside on the counter and continued to work.

Due to the lack of customers and orders made, Marth began to start cleaning the tables. He collected every plate, cup, utensils, and tray used and brought them back to the kitchen for cleaning, and disposed used, dirty napkins. As he quickly cleaned Table #38 (the two best friends were kicked out by Dedede.), he noticed Elice, Merric, and Caeda getting out of their seats and leaving the restaurant. When they walked out the door, Marth waved goodbye to them, earning a wave and a friendly smile back from Elice. Merric and Caeda were wrapped in a conversation of their own, not noticing Marth.

"I should clean that table next." Marth thought to himself as he gathered all of the used utensils and piled them on the plate, which also held two cups cradling ice cubes.

After setting the objects into the enormous sink in the kitchen, Marth hurried towards Table #27. Unlike Table #38, instead of having used or unused napkins piled throughout the table and utensils carelessly left where the patron was seated, the dishes and cups were neatly stacked and placed on the spotless pizza tray. There was not a single scrap of napkin left; they were wisely thrown in the trash.

"Wow!" Marth thought to himself cheerfully, as this was less tedious work for him. *"Elice and the others were really nice to clean up after themselves! I should thank them when they come back!"*

However, despite the collage students' best efforts to leave their area clean, Marth decided to check underneath the table. Who knew? A napkin or fork might have unobtrusively slipped and fell on the ground!

Underneath the table was the wooly carpet, the supporting legs of the table and chairs, and nasty, disgusting gum of all colors pasted underneath the table. In repulse, Marth was about to get up and continue his work when...

Something glistering caught his eyes.

The sparkling object was sitting on one of the chairs. Curious, and wondering what it was, Marth kneeled down, took the object, and carefully examined it. What was it? It looked so pretty...

Marth eventually identified the accessory as Elice's tiara. It closely resembled those of a princess's, however it looked more like a hairband at first glance and its gold and sapphire was entirely made of cheap plastic. Although it was an ordinary, childlike toy to most people, Marth sensed that it was very important to Elice. He felt a familiar tone of both happiness and sorrowful surrounding the tiara.

Which immediately struck Marth's string of panic. Even though it did not belong to him, it still belonged to someone! If Elice lost her beloved tiara, she might feel depressed and lost! This fact served as the perfect excuse for Marth to race out of the restaurant, tiara in shaking, tight hands, feet scurrying around, and heart thumping hysterically.

"Elice?!" Marth called as loud as he could as he burst out of the entrance of the joint. His azure bangs whipped in his eyes as he panicky looked around for the azure-haired lady. "You forgot this!" he cried out.

Maybe she went into the parking lot next to the joint! Hoping for the best, Marth rushed down the sidewalk and glanced around the tiny lot. He did see a truck, five gray cars, and one yellow motorcycle, but that was all. No humans and no Elice. With a disappointed sigh, Marth sadly looked at the tiara in his hands. He really wanted to return the tiara to Elice.

A dark, black truck was parked in a shady corner across from the joint. With binoculars, Hades and Ghirahim carefully observed the unsuspecting bluenette, who began to nervously pace around.

"There he is." Hades spoke. "Do you think we should nab 'em now?"

"No, we shouldn't." Ghirahim bluntly answered. "Even though we now have the necessary equipment to capture him, we don't want to cause such a commotion or chase him away."

Hades nodded in understanding as he watched Marth run back into the joint. "So, all we need is a trap, right?"

"Yes." Was Ghirahim's short answer.

"Like what?"

"I have no clue." Ghirahim sighed. "We don't know a lot about this boy, so we don't know his weaknesses and desires."

"I think he has an interest in that blue-haired woman he met in that restaurant." Hades remarked. "He has a pretty good taste in women in my opinion."

"I have a question to ask you." Ghirahim spoke up, earning a nod of approval from Hades. "Do you know anyone who looks like her?"

"Maybe, with a little makeup or less." Hades shrugged.

When Marth entered the joint, he nearly bumped into the hurrying Link. His had his backpack on, indicating that he was leaving. Link awkwardly halted, his footsteps squeaking loudly on the floor. Marth blinked; Link seemed to be awfully worried about something.

"What's wrong, Link?" Marth asked.

"I forgot that I have a doctor's appointment today." Link quickly answered as he rushed around Marth to get to the door. "I have to leave now, see ya!" Link shakily waved at Marth before shoving the glass door open and hurrying out. Marth jumped; Link's force exerted on the door made him think that the glass was about to shatter.

Marth shrugged to himself as he took notice of the uncollected utensils, gathered them, and brought them to the kitchen. Once when he dumped them in the sink, he turned around and noticed Link's diary still sitting on the large, flat counter, lonely without its owner. Marth rolled his eyes as he took the diary. Gee, what was with people leaving their belongings behind?

Wait, was this Link's diary, a precious book that consisted of Link's writings that were about his life? Marth felt a bit curious and mischievous. How was Link doing? Looking behind his back to see if Zelda noticed his presence, Marth quietly crept out of the kitchen into the restroom. There, he locked himself in one of the stalls and say on the toilet, where he could read in private. The only person in the small yet hollow room was him. No one to come and disturb him, and no one to tell him to stop reading! Music playing distantly from the lonely speaker was the only think Marth heard as he flipped to the recent page. This was going to be interesting! Marth smirked to himself naughtily as he began to read the paragraph.

Dear diary,

I'm supposed to be working in the joint now, but I want to take some time to describe my job. First of all, I either have to wash the dishes and whatnot and help Zelda make some pizza if we have lots of orders. My friends Marth serves the pizza and collects the dishes, while Ike takes orders. It might seem easy and simple, but it has its moments. One time, I told Zelda that I liked her IN PUBLIC! I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT I DID THAT. So far in my life, this gotta be one of my most embarrassing moments.

Speaking of Zelda, I kinda have a crush on her. I want to take the relationship further, but I'm not sure if Zelda has the same feeling for me.

Marth giggled immaturely at the last sentence. He knew it! Link did love Zelda!

First of all, what if she just wants to be friends with me? I don't mind being "friend zoned" unlike other guys but I'm not sure if I can handle that. Due to her previous experiences with other guys, Zelda's relationship with boys is kinda complicated.

Even if Zelda likes me back, I still don't know how to handle it! First off, if we become a couple, sooner or later, we have to meet each other's parents! I don't mind telling her that my little brother Toon and I were adopted, but that would make her wonder why were we adopted! How am I supposed to tell her that I lost my parents due to an abrupt murder?

All of Marth's muscles tensed as a chill shot down his back. Link's parents were murdered? No wonder why was he adopted! What happened?

I can't remember every detail, but I know that the murder occurred when I was around ten while Toon was... I don't remember, five or six? I remember coming home to the bloodstained house with Toon and panicky calling the police. I don't know what happened, but in the end, the police came to the conclusion that my parents were victims of a hate crime. For pretty stupid reasons, in my old neighborhood, Hylians were looked down upon. I don't see the problem with being born with pointy ears!

With that, the entry ended, obviously unfinished due to interruptions.

His hands starting to shake, Marth unsteadily left the bathroom stall. Thinking about the mentioned murder began to make him quite lightheaded. Yes, it was terrifying but mysteriously, Marth felt a bit funny. It was a moment when you we're supposed to feel quite sorry and sad for another person, yet you slightly feel happy in the inside. Marth began to feel a

tingle of joy in his heart as he pondered over the details of the mused.

"What is wrong with me?" Marth questioned himself as he went to the sink. After setting Link's diary down, he turned on faucet splashed water over his face. Maybe he was just overworked, despite the fact that the joint was not as busy as usual.

Marth wiped his wet face with the sleeve of his shirt, making it turn into a darker shade of color. As he turned off the faucet, he looked in the mirror. Instead of being greeted by his own, unique reflection, he was met with a completely different person.

Yes, the person did look like Marth. The only notable difference was his expression. His eyes were dull and lifeless as the cerulean orbs glared viciously back like a vengeful ghost. His lips were cured into a cross between a scowl and a disappointed look.

Taken off-guard by the horrifying image, Marth immediately took Link's diary and zipped out of the bathroom, sensing that his grotesque reflection was watching him leave. He never wanted to go in that restroom again.

Author's Notes: For once, I actually have free time!

OT: Here's another long chapter, so hopefully it didn't burn people's eyes with boredom. My chapters are usually at least a thousand words long.

Also, I would like to announce that I'm considering doing a SSB webcomic based on this fanfic. I'm saying "considering" because I might loose the motivation later on.

Story Questions:

Who do you think the person referred as "he", "him", and "his" by Elice and her friends is?

Why do you think Marth felt jealous when Merric and Elice embraced each other?

How do you see yourself in your mirror? (Personality-wise.)

Chapter 20: Chapter 20

With Elice's tiara in hand, Marth admired its luminous features as he sat on his sleeping bag. He noticed the distinctive details, such as a certain tiny rhinestone or a small pattern. Even though the tiara was meant for little girls, it was a beautiful object.

A bit intrigued, Marth wondered how he looked like with the tiara on. Of course, it was a bit silly as Marth was a boy, but there were no rules restricting his actions. Marth rose and slowly crept out of Roy's room. Once when he was in the hallways, he carefully peered around for any eyes watching him; he did not want to get caught wearing a girl's accessory!

The coast was clear, leaving him to sneak into the bathroom. Inside, he locked himself in so no one could interfere with his privacy. Marth glanced at the mirror and much to his relief, he saw his typical, everyday reflection; eighteen-year-old male with straight azure hair and innocent cerulean eyes. He brushed some stray hair out of his face before setting the tiara on his head.

Marth quickly blinked as he continued to look at himself in the mirror. He was not sure how to describe himself wearing the faux accessory. Girly might be an adjective. His slightly long hair gave Marth a slight appearance of a girl. Princely might be another fine adjective. Princes wore a crown to exert their royalty, status, and power.

Something strange began to pulse in Marth's head. It began as a harmless tinge in his head. However, as seconds passed, it transformed into one of the worst headaches he ever had. Ache began to spin rapidly and crash into the walls of Marth's head. Light and the color white suddenly became a source of pain. Scrambling to keep his balance, Marth ungracefully pulled open the bathroom door and stumbled back into Roy's room.

Once when he was in the area, Marth collapsed onto his sleeping bag and clutched his soft, blue hair, groaning loudly in pain. He buried his face into his pillow, wishing that all of the light could disappear and leave him alone in the darkness, where he could comfortably look around and stand. Mysteriously, something new was sprouting in his head as it leeched the pain away. What was it? When the sting zapped off, Marth unsteadily looked around. The light still burned his eyes, however it was not as harmful.

That was when it hit him. Marth realized that he knew Elice in one point of his life. Her tiara served as a memo of her.

But why? What did the tiara have to do with Marth's past? Also, how was Elice involved in his life? Was she a close friend? A girlfriend? A close relative? A classmate? A bully? (Marth doubted that.) Marth stayed still, hoping that anther blast of pain could come. Although the experience hurt, Marth greatly desired it, as it would give him a piece of his memory back!

Much to Marth's distraught, a spark of pain never ignited the warm flame of memory.

Marth refused to let this slip. He has to know how Elice was related to him! Now, he remembered something through the influence of pain... Marth began to pound himself on the top of head with his fists. Yes, it did inflict pain on his head and fist, but no memory. Maybe the pain had to be stronger! Marth noticed the Lilo and Stitch book still sitting on the bed stand. He took it and with one abrupt move, slammed it on his forehead.

Pain, yes. Memories, no.

Tears of frustration began to fill Marth's enraged eyes. Why would he not remember anything?! Just as when he was about to hit the winning home run of discover, the pitcher had to throw him a sharp curve ball! Completely desperate and full of anguish, Marth screamed in rage as he rushed into a wall and bashed his head against it. He began to quietly cry to himself as he sank to the floor in defeat.

Roy was coming up the stairs when he heard Marth's violent yell and a loud thud. Thinking that Marth happened to hurt himself, Roy hurried into his room and exclaimed, "Marth! Are you ok?!" His navy-blue eyes were large with concern.

Roy's question was answered by Marth's soft weeps. "I... I'm ok." Marth shakily said as he tried to blink his tears away.

"What happened?" Roy asked, kneeling down to Marth's level.

"I... I thought I remembered something, but I didn't..." Marth whimpered the answer. "I recognized someone from my past, but I couldn't remember who she was..."

Roy hugged Marth, we tightly embarrassed him back. He felt his heart sink deeper in the water of sadness when he heard Marth sniff loudly to himself as he held back tears. "It's ok, Marth. Calm down, Marth..." Roy calmly spoke, trying to soothe the angst bluenette. "It's ok..."

What was this place? Pairs of eyes slowly looked around the dark, gray surroundings. There's only a single bright light above my head. Two brick walls pointed down the alleyway. Why am I here? This isn't even safe!

Footsteps. I can hear them! I must hide! Now I am hiding behind a trash can as I watch someone walk unsuspectingly pass me. What's this? There's something in my hand? Eyes slowly peer down at my hand. Clutched in my hand was a large, sharp knife.

I suddenly feel excited as I run towards the man. No, what am I doing? I don't want torun! Iwant to hide! Whatiswrong with me?! Whywon't my legsstop!

Happiness. I felthappiness when I drove myknife intothe man'sback. Blood. Somuchblood. The man'sscreams forhelp only convincesme to keeponhurtinghim. Joy. Ifelt joywhen I looks atthebloodiedbody. Itfeelsverygood totookit outonsomeoneelse.

He'sdead. Everythingsdead. Everyonewillbedead!

AslongasI havethismask noonewillsaw howlisborn andwhoamI and Iwouldfinally behappy.

A frightened, deafening scream echoed throughout the Pherae's house as Marth panicky jolted himself awake. Still confused and feeling distorted, he fearfully looked around Roy's room, which was first seen as a blur of black, white, and gray. The only thing that Marth could hear was the fierce sound of his heart pumping blood through his alarmed system, his unsteady breathing, and an odd pulsing in his ears. Finally noticing that he was awake, Marth anxiously clutched a tuff of his hair and viciously pulled it. C'mon Marth, that was just a dream... Calm down!

"Marth, you ok?!" Within a split second, Roy leapt out of his bed and hassled towards Marth's side. "Marth?"

"...It's just a dream..." Marth could only mumble to himself, his eyes dark and numb. "...It's just a dream..."

A bright, orange ray slipped through the door's cracks as the hallway's lights turned on. The rays eventually turned into an enormous beam that engulfed the room when the rectangular barrier swung open, revealing an exhausted yet concerned Eliwood and Lyn.

"What happened?" Eliwood asked as he strolled into the room. Lyn followed him.

"I just had a nightmare." Marth shakily replied, releasing his hair, giving his head enough torture.

"A nightmare?" Lyn spoke up. "More like a night terror with you screaming that loud." She remarked.

Eliwood gently set his warm hand on Marth's soft head. "What was your dream about?"

Marth slightly flinched at the sudden yet tender touch. He began to remember every tiny detail of the disturbing nightmare. Although it was now a mess and blur of colors pasted in his memories, Marth felt the sharp knife's handle in his trembling, right hand. The echoing footsteps, petrified screams, dying croaks, and the sickening sound of a dagger slicing into flesh shot a chill down his back. The colors that remained in his head formed into recognizable shapes, such as the victim, the dark alleyway, and of course, blood. Pure, cardinal, fresh blood.

"...I don't want to talk about it." Marth bluntly answered.

"Marth, please talk about it." Roy urged. "If you hold it in, we don't know what's wrong."

"I don't want to talk about it, because I don't want to think about it." Marth retorted straightforwardly.

Roy was about to protest again, when Eliwood immediately stopped him. "If you don't want to talk about it, that's fine with us." he comforted. "Are you still scared?"

"Well..." Marth warily started. "A little bit..." He was a bit ashamed for waking the entire house. Hopefully, it did not wake the neighbors.

"Do you think you can go back to sleep?" Eliwood asked again.

"Maybe..." Marth spoke unsurely. "...Not really..."

Eliwood looked at Lyn, like if he was asking her something. Much to his relief, Lyn nodded in approval. "Then, we'll stay with you until you fall asleep."

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Marth hesitantly asked.

"We want to." Lyn answered. "We want to make you feel safe."

"I don't mind feeling tired tomorrow." Roy added, hoping to encourage Marth's choice.

Marth nodded as he slowly shut his eyes and waited for sleep to claim him. Although he knew that he might have a nightmare again, Roy's and Lyn's words and Eliwood's hands softly stroking his hair assured that they were willing to protect him, no matter what the cost. With a quiet sigh, Marth opened his eyes slightly, meeting the gaze of two pairs of identical, navy blue orbs and emerald orbs. Light from the hallway shone on the hallway, illuminating their trust and care for him. With one last look, Marth closed his eyes again and patiently waited for sleep to arrive at their destination: his consciousness.

Anxiously looking around, Marth waited nervously in front of Link's doorstep. Although Link was usually the organized one who reminded Marth of work, for a strange reason, he did not leave the house at his usual time.

"Link, please hurry!" Marth thought uneasily to himself. *"By now, we should be going to work!"*

Marth glanced at the driveway, which was completely empty. Due to the absence of cars, he assumed that Link and his family went out. It could be possible that they dropped Link off at the joint. Marth huffed in annoyance, his lower lip covering his upper lip, forming a disappointed pout. He could have gotten a ride from Link and saved so much trouble and time! Marth then looked across the street towards Ike's house. Like Link's, the driveway was completely empty! Then again, Ike's parents worked. So it could be possible that Ike was still in his house, getting ready for work.

Trying not to waste time, Marth rushed across the street towards Ike's doorsteps. Once at his destination, he softly tapped on the door's wooden surface with his knuckles and waited for a few moments for Ike to reply. As he waited, Marth fretfully glanced at the cloudy sky. Through the color of the light, he tried to determine the current time, which was unsuccessful. Marth relied on a mechanical, manmade clock in order to tell if he was early, late, or on time.

No response. Marth knocked again. This time, he knocked on the door with his fists.

Nothing. Not even a reply from someone Marth did not know. With a small sigh, Marth began to leave Ike's doorstep. It looked like he needed to walk to work by himself today...

Wait... Work?

Terror struck Marth's heart, which traveled down to his feet and up to his brain, the main control center of the nervous center. Panic caused his heart rate to increase along with his breathing rate. Oh no, he was late! He shouldn't have waited for his friends to come with him! He should have just gone to work when he noticed that they were not here! Light, nervous steps eventually turned into a dashing run.

At that moment in time, Marth's surroundings were a blur of colors. The cars were blaring colors of all sizes that zoomed down the streets. The buildings, which were usually rectangular cubes, were distorted shapes. Pedestrians, whether they were small children, teenagers, or adults, immediately stepped out of their way to let the hurrying bluenette through. Yet, some of them were less eager to let Marth continue his way.

"Hey, watch it!" a middle-aged man shouted at Marth when he accidentally bumped into him.

"S-Sorry." Marth quickly and softly said, giving the maddened man a quick glance as he hurried towards the corner of the street.

Across the street was the pizza joint, Marth's destination. Breathing loudly for air and exhausted for running so long, Marth tiredly punched the stoplight's silver button, which was placed on a yellow panel with crossing instructions. A small beep cried out, and Marth impatiently waited for the flaring, red light to turn green. It was that moment when you were in a hurry, and yet life had to place obstacles in your way for its amusement.

Marth needed an excuse. He knew that his boss Dedede would be tremendously furious at him for being late. Should he say that he was waiting for his friends, who never showed up? No, they were already in work! Maybe he could say that Roy fell ill and he needed to take care of him for a brief moment until Eliwood got back! No, that did not sound like a great excuse...

As Marth nervous tried to think of a good reason to be late, he looked to his right and noticed a familiar, azure-haired woman strolling up the street towards him.

Who was that? Could it be? Though Marth was quite far away from her, Marth vaguely assumed that she was Elice.

Marth reached up to his head and felt the warm, plastic tiara. While he looked a bit funny and weird with the tiara on, he ignored this humiliating, shaming fact and convinced himself that he was doing this for the good. Yes, he was wearing someone else's accessory; it belonged to Elice. Some people called it stealing if they did not know the while story. Yet, it was part of Marth's plan to return it to its original owner. Marth did want to meet Elice again and not have her tiara on hold. Yes, he could put it in his pocket or backpack, but Marth feared forgetting about it. So he decided to place it on his head. It served as a great reminder for him.

When the stoplight flashed green, instead of crossing the street like he originally intended to, Marth turned to his right and started to sprint towards Elice. "Eliiiiiice!" he exclaimed as the air whizzed in his ears and his bangs flew into his eyes.

Unusually, Elice turned and entered a street alley. This did make Marth a bit doubtful. Was she really Elice? She could be another lady with blue hair! However, that unnecessary uncertainty flew over Marth's head like his hair. The teen was determined to return the tiara to Elice! Failure to do so was not an acceptable option!

"Elice, please stop!" Marth begged desperately as he rushed into the alley. "Wait!"

The alley was a tiny maze of twists and turns. One alleyway led to another alleyway. Marth, still willing to reach Elice, began to wonder why she entered a place like this. The narrow, claustrophobia-inducing passages, shady corners, and lack of the presence of others began to make him nervous. Why would Elice go to a shady place like this? She did not seem to be the kind of person who enjoys spending time here...

Finally, the long passageway led Marth to a large, open area. There Elice was, her back facing Marth.

"Elice, why are you running away from me?" Marth spoke up, panting softly as he approached her. "I need to give this back to you!"

All of a sudden, "Elice" turned around, looking strikingly unrecognizable and dissimilar to Elice. Instead of looking at an azure-haired, young woman with fair skin and cerulean eyes, Marth was facing a middle-aged, azure-haired woman with tanned skin and dark, lavender eyes. Marth was struck with confusion. What happened?! What should he do? Should he tell this lady that she resembled someone that he knew? Or should he just quickly run away, hoping that he would never bump into her again?

"...You're not Elice!" Marth gasped nervously, his eyes faintly broadening.

Aversa laughed at the young man's astonishment. "Yes, I'm not this "Elice" you're talking about." she chuckled.

Marth began to awkwardly back away, as he was starting to feel a tad scared. Unbeknownst to him, Hades, Ganondorf, and Ghirahim began to enter the space, their hands holding thick ropes.

"I'll j-j-just go now." Marth uneasily spoke, stopping in his tracks and keeping his eyes on Aversa. "I'm s-s-sorry for following you."

"Pardon me, but you're not going anywhere from now." Aversa replied.

"Why?" Marth asked. He was confused unaware of what was about to happen.

"Because you're coming with us!"

With a frightened cry, Marth suddenly tuned around to face the source of the new voice. He was instantly tackled by the three workers, who became tanked in the fierce struggle. Marth tried to get away by kicking, scratching, and even biting his enemies. However, it was three against one, rendering Marth's efforts futile. He was flipped onto his stomach and his thrashing arms were pinned to his back as ropes looped around his abdomen and tightened, sealing his arms in place. This was followed by his wrists.

"Stop it!" Marth exclaimed panicky, his terrified voice echoing in the alley. "Let me go!" He swung his right leg at Ganondorf, who grabbed him by his left leg, hitting him in the stomach.

"Urk!" Ganondorf groaned in pain.

Ghirahim took Marth's exhausted right leg and pinned it next to his left leg. "The ropes, Hades!" he quickly told.

"So strong for a guy around his build." Hades remarked cooly as he began to bind the bluenette's ankles. This was

followed by his legs and his thighs, making it harder for Marth to struggle.

"Someone please help me!" Marth cried out desperately as he twisted in his bounds.

"Silence, little boy!" Ghirahim reached over Marth's mouth to cover and muffle the cries, only to get viciously bitten by the bluenette. Marth growled like an Arcanine as his teeth sank deeper into the gray flesh, earning a yelp of pain and a slap from Ghirahim. "The little brat bit me!"

"HELP ME!" Marth screamed loudly as he slowly slipped into hysterics. "I NEED HELP! SOMEONE SAVE ME!"

"I'm tired of your screaming!" Ganondorf yelled. Without warning, he violently punched Marth in the stomach, knocking the wind out of him. As Marth quickly and desperately gasped for air, Ganondorf took a long strip of a knotted, white cloth out of his pocket. He forced the knotted part into Marth's mouth and tied its ends behind his head.

"Nnmmph!" Marth whined helplessly as he bit the gag wedged in between his teeth and struggled. His azure hair fell over his eyes. "Mmmmph! Grrrmph!"

"He is such an adorable boy when helpless and scared." Aversa spoke, causing Marth to stop struggling and look up at her with wide, cerulean eyes. His pupils were enlarged, making his eyes seem black. A gentle yet chilling hand ran through Marth's azure, messy hair. Marth whimpered fearfully through the gag in response and trembled.

"Call in the van." Ghirahim ordered as he examined the bite mark etched in his hands. "Ugh, I think I need antibiotics for this..."

After alerting the other worker through a device, Ganondorf picked Marth up and threw him over his shoulder. Marth let out a muffled yelp in shock as he shifted uncomfortably in his bounds. He anxiously glanced around his surroundings as the villains carried him down the alleyways. The ropes that pinned his arms and legs into place were too tight, as his circulation was slowly beginning to cut off and he could not breathe properly. Saliva began to drip from the corners of Marth's mouth, as the gag prevented him from swallowing and could not absorb any more spit.

"Who are these people?" Marth asked himself, shaking slightly. *"What do they want from me?"*

At the end of the alley was a parked van waiting for them. Its engines running, the car rumbled noisily as Ghirahim and Hades opened the back doors for Ganondorf, who tossed Marth into the trunk. Marth rolled for a brief moment before colliding with the back of a seat. He groaned in pain as the doors slammed shut and his captors entered the vehicle.

The van's engine grumbled louder as Marth felt the van drive out of the alley. A sudden bump caused him to helplessly cry out as he slammed the side of his body against the seat again.

"They're going to take me somewhere!" Marth panicky thought to himself. *"I need to escape! But..."* Marth tugged on his restraints. *"The ropes are too thick. Maybe I can cry for help..."*

Inhaling as much air as he could through his unblocked nose, Marth began to yell as loud as he could for help. Although the gag garbled and muffled his cries, Marth refused to give up. Maybe another driver could hear him! Begging tears began to fill his eyes as his mouth began to dry up.

However, Marth's efforts were beginning to annoy his captors.

"Can you guys silence that boy?!" Validar demanded to Ganondorf and Ghirahim, who were sitting in the back. "He is getting on my nerves!"

"Hey, shut up!" Ganondorf shouted at Marth, who obeyed for a few seconds before resuming his cries. "Damn it, he won't listen!"

"Hit him on the head!" Validar responded, slowly losing his patience. "I don't care if he passes out or not, I just want him to be quiet!"

Ganondorf looked around the van and spotted a large, gray wrench sitting on the ground next to him. Without wasting a second, he grabbed the heavy, metal tool, turned around to face Marth, and threw the object at his head. The wrench struck Marth directly in the back of his head, causing him to exclaim weakly in pain before slumping onto the ground unconscious.

SLAP!

An azure-haired boy at the age of eleven tumbled onto the floor from the impact of his strict father's palm. Whimpering softly to himself, he cradled his swollen, pink cheek as he sat up watched his cold father exit out of his room, his thundering steps echoing down the long hallway. Trying to hold back tears in his cerulean eyes, the boy bit his lips and buried his face into his knees; he needed to put on a facade. Any forms of expression were prohibited in his home.

No matter how hard he tried, how much time, and how much work he put into pleasing his blunt, punitive family, his efforts was never acknowledged nor appreciated in his caged world.

The electronic, catchy tune of a ringtone woke Roy up from his short yet refreshing nap. He took a few seconds to disconnect from the dream world as he took his hone and answered it. "Emmm... Hello?" he sleepily asked.

"Hey Roy, this is Ike." Roy raised a doubtful eyebrow at the tone of Ike's voice. He did not sound happy.

"What's wrong?" Roy yawned as he sat up.

"Is Marth still at your house?" Ike asked worriedly. *"He hasn't arrived at work yet. He is thirty minutes late, and our boss Dedede is pissed off! Where is he?"*

"He should be at work by now. I saw him leave the house." Roy began to feel nervous. "Is Link here?"

"Yeah, but he arrived earlier today. His parents had to go somewhere, so they decided to drive him here. Today, I have to work an earlier shift."

"What?!" Roy exclaimed as he clutched his phone so tightly, he thought he was going to crush it. "That m-means, he walked to work by himself! But, I don't think he got lost!"

"I don't know, Roy. Even though Smashburg is a safe city, that doesn't mean that something can happen."

Roy could not hold in his nervousness any longer. Still holding his phone, he hurriedly got off the sofa and put on his blue jacket. This was serious; something could have happened to Marth! Was he ok? Did he get into an accident?

"Hey Roy, are you still here?" Ike asked.

"Yeah! I'm going to the joint with Pit as soon as possible." Roy responded quickly. "I need to talk to the others!"

"Ok." Ike hung up after that statement.

Roy clumsily slipped his phone into his jean pockets as he hurried out of the front door. After locking it, he rushed across the street to Pit's house. Not even bothering sending a text message to Pit to ask him to come out of the house, Roy anxiously knocked on the door several times before being greeted by the angel.

"Hi, Roy!" Pit greeted cheerfully before meeting Roy's worried gaze. "What's wrong?" he asked, his smile falling.

"I need you to come to the joint with me! It's an emergency!" Roy answered, gesturing Pit to come with him.

Pit followed Roy and the two hurried down the street. "Wait, what happened?"

"I'll explain when we get to the joint!" Roy responded panicky.

Author's Notes: Surprise, surprise! A quick update!

OT: I managed to finish chapter 20 quickly, so here it is! The next chapters will finally concentrate on the asylum and Marth's past, so be on the lookout on that! (And for once, I actually proofread for errors. Not counting one of the parts of this chapter. Hurrah.)

Story Questions:

Had you accidentally mistook a stranger for someone you know?

What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter?

Who do you think Marth is closest to in this story?

Chapter 21: Chapter 21

Marth groaned in pain as he dizzily awoke. The first thing he noticed was the throbbing ache in his head. With a weak noise, Marth tried to reach for his head, only to learn that his arms were tied behind his back. Marth struggled a bit before feeling a small pulse of pain in his legs. He attempted to stretch, only to learn that his legs were bound as well. Starting to panic, Marth attempted to speak, only to utter garbled, stifled gibberish. The gag in his mouth was taken notice, making Marth's sanity zoom towards the highest level of hysterics. With a muffled, frightened cry, Marth began to twist and turn in his bounds in attempts to break free. What happened?! Who tied him up?!

That was when Marth remembered his capture. He remembered every detail of his abduction, from following "Elice" into the alley, being tackled, bounded, and gagged by three men, to being tossed into the van. But, what happened afterwards? Marth noticed the metal wrench next to his head. He probably did something that his abductors did not like, resulting in one of them knocking him unconscious with the blunt tool. Recalling the throbbing ache in his head, Marth concluded that it was futile to attempt to escape. If he were to make even a single, weak noise for help, it would result in his captors hurting him in order to prevent him from being discovered.

Since he was alone, Marth began to weep quietly to himself. He felt his hot, stinging tears pour down his cheeks, which were pink due to exhaustion. Fear consumed his body. Where were his kidnappers taking him? Were they going to demand a ransom from the Pheraes? Were they part of some sort of an illegal trafficking? Were they going to sell him to a stranger?

Whatever the reason was, Marth dearly wanted the Pheraes or anyone he knew to save him. He wanted them to halt the van, stop the criminals, discover him, free him from his bindings, and reassure that everything was fine for the time being. Then, he would go home and everything would go back to normal. However, even though Marth maintained the innocence of a child, he knew that the star he wished to was already dead upon the wish's arrival. His foster family and friends were probably oblivious to the fact that he was kidnapped. If they finally noticed that he was gone, it would be too late. Marth would be awfully far away from them, making it difficult for them to find him.

Now that he thought of it, where was he? Marth tried to move, as his position made it hard for him to look and see where he was. How far was he from home? Maybe he could flee his captors and return home! At that moment, the van abruptly halted. The sudden stop made a silent gasp escape from his lips.

The sound of the van's doors opening and his captors getting out began to make Marth awfully nervous. If the van stopped, there could be only two things. Either they were getting gas, or they arrived at their final destination.

"Let's see how the little boy is doing." Ghirahim said to his coworkers as he opened the van's back doors. He gasped in awe. "Oh look, the boy is awake!"

A small tear ran down Marth's cheeks as he looked at his captors; he had a hunch about his awaited fate.

"Awww, so cute." Aversa cooed at Marth, who continued to let his tears roll down his face. "He has been crying."

"Let's take him out right now." Ganondorf said as he got into the back of the van and took Marth by his bounded wrists. He dragged Marth out of the van and roughly set him onto the ground like a heavy bag of groceries. Marth flinched as he felt an ache in his backside and tried to move, despite his binds. Although he was out cold during most of the traumatizing trip, he sensed that he had not been moving for nearly an hour. This led to cramps in his exhausted muscles.

From there on, the workers began to untie Marth. As the gag loosened and pulled out of his mouth, Marth breathed a tiny sigh of relief and began to dampen his dry mouth and lips with his tongue. He was glad to have that cloth taken out of his mouth; the large knot absorbed most of saliva and made his jaw ache. The ropes that coiled tightly around his arms, stomach, and legs were also undone as well, allowing Marth to stretch briefly before the bindings were replaced by handcuffs and shackles. The reign of relief ended after a short period, now replaced with a new source of fear.

Trying to figure out his current location, Marth glanced nervously around his surroundings. He noticed that he and his captors were on an island in the middle of the blue bay. A large white building with an intimidating facade was seen glaring directly at him. Once plastered and painted white, it was now dull and gray with age and corruption. A watch tower was perched on top of the building, searching for any possible escapees. The impression that this environment was less than hospitable and more menacing. Beginning to tremble nervously, Marth looked behind him and saw a long, sturdy bridge that led back to the city Smashburg. Although it was considered to be a powerful structure by many, it was a symbol that spelled freedom to Marth.

"We must take him to Gharnef now." Validar spoke, gesturing to the other workers to come with him. "He will be pleased

with this arrival."

Ganondorf nodded as his coworkers began to follow Validar. He noticed Marth staring into the distance at the bridge and the city. "Hey, get up!" he shouted as he suddenly grabbed Marth's handcuffed wrists and pulled him up to his feet. Marth cried out in fright and looked up at Ganondorf with wide eyes. "Come with me." Ganondorf ordered in a low voice as he began to drag Marth with him.

Marth softly whimpered as he followed Ganondorf. "W...Who are you guys?" he quietly asked, his voice shaking.

"You have the right to stay silent." Ganondorf only retorted. "Don't ask questions."

With a small nod, Marth obeyed Ganondorf's orders. As they began to enter the building, Marth looked behind and looked at the bridge, desiring his freedom.

"Marth! Marth?!" Roy called as he wandered the streets close to the pizza joint. "Where are you?!" he asked it loud as he peered into every alley.

When Roy and Pit finally arrived at the pizza joint, they were immediately told by Ike that Marth had not arrived at work. Combined with the fact that Roy did see Marth leave for work, they concluded that Marth has gone missing. Given permission by Dedede, Ike, Link, and Zelda was allowed to search for Marth along with Roy and Pit; Dedede decided to close the joint temporarily much to his frustration.

"Pit, do you see him?" Roy called to the brunet angel, who was quickly flying around above his head.

After glancing around for a few moments, Pit shook his head. "No, I don't see him." he sighed as he landed on the ground next to Roy. "Hey Roy, are you ok?"

Roy was silently looking directly at the ground. Since he did not reply to Pit's question, Pit assumed that he was awfully worried about Marth. Ever since the day he met the soft-hearted bluenette, Pit sensed that Marth already built a steady, strong bond between Roy, even though Roy did not enjoy his company at first. As the days passed, Roy eventually noticed Marth struggling to make new materials for his bridge and decided to help him.

"...It's about Marth, right?" Pit asked again, earning a small nod from the solemn redhead. "Don't worry, I think he's fine."

"N-No." Roy bluntly replied, struggling to not cry. "He's not ok!"

"Look, I know that you see Marth as someone who can't fight for himself." Pit tried to comfort his best friend. "But, if something did happen to Marth, I think he's enduring his pain for us. We just need to hope for the best!"

"Ok." Was Roy's short answer. "Let's go back to the joint. Maybe the others found him or something."

When Pit and Roy arrived back at the joint, to their disappointment, only Link, Zelda, and Ike were there, indicating that they had not found Marth yet. Once when the boys came in, Dedede immediately opened the joint for his customers, much to Roy's miff. C'mon, why couldn't that guy think about someone else instead of business and money?!

"Any luck?" Pit asked.

"Nothing." Ike huffed in frustration. "I asked people if they saw an azure-haired boy known as Marth. They said no." The indigo-haired male clutched his fists tightly. "I don't get it! Why is it damn hard to see a boy around my height with one of the bluest hair and eyes?! Are they colorblind or something?!"

"Link?" Roy spoke up.

"Nothin'." Link responded with a sad voice. "Like what Ike said, no one ever saw Marth."

"What?!" Roy exclaimed in shock. "No one saw Marth?! Did they even hear anything suspicious?"

Zelda finally spoke up. "Actually, I did get something strange." she stated. "I saw one of my neighbors and asked her if she saw Marth. She did say that she didn't see him, but she mentioned that when she was walking by the alleyways, she heard a boy screaming for help."

"Wait, a boy screaming for help?" Roy's face turned as white as snow, realizing that his worst fear might've come true.

"Yes, a boy screaming for help." Zelda concluded. "Do you think that was Marth?"

"...Could be." Link remarked. He noticed Roy, who suddenly sat in a chair. "Roy? Are you ok?"

Roy unsteadily set a weak hand on his light forehead. He began to picture horrid likelihoods of Marth's current state. An image of the bluenette bounded in thick ropes and blindfolded with duct tape slapped over his mouth was the first vision that appeared. The interior of a stuffy, heated car trunk acted as his enclosure. The vision then abruptly transformed into a new scene, showing Marth bounded to a chair located in a dark basement, carelessly left alone. The blindfold was removed, allowing Marth to fearfully look around his dim surroundings with wide, frightened, cerulean eyes. Unable to hold in his horror-struck emotions, tears bowled down his face.

If Marth was truly kidnapped, then what did his captors want from the Pheraes in return? Probably money. But, who committed the terrible act? Would the kidnappers alert the victims' family? How much time did they give? If the Pheraes did not give what they wanted in time, what would they do to poor Marth? As Roy began to frightfully wonder, Link suddenly went to his side and set a tender hand on his fiery hair.

"Roy, are you ok?" Link repeated, starting to feel a bit concerned for his friend.

"Yeah..." Roy started unevenly. "It's just that I'm worried about Marth! I don't want him to get hurt..."

"We understand, Roy." Zelda spoke up, trying to soothe the redhead. "But, the only thing we can do is hope. We can't control Marth or his kidnappers' actions."

"I-I know." Roy replied. "But, we don't know where he is now or if he even got kidnapped. How can we look for him?"

"We can always go on a search party." Ike suggested before eying the wall clock. "We need to get back to work, Roy, or Dedede's gonna get really mad at us! We'll talk this later!" Ike sternly added.

"Ok, where are going to meet?" Pit asked.

"Roy's house."

Pit and Roy began to exit the joint. "All right, we'll see you later!" Pit spoke as they walked out of the restaurant.

As the angel and redhead began to walk back home, the two stayed silent. Pit did not want to start a conversation about Marth. Being a close friend since middle school, he knew every personal detail about Roy. Knowing that the mention of his biological, deceased mother would trigger a breakdown in the redhead, Pit assumed that it would be the same with Marth. Roy on the other hand, just did not want to talk. He did not want to converse at this moment; he was lost in his thoughts.

Although Pit was by his side, Roy felt unusually empty and lonely, like if a piece of his heart was missing. A familiar feeling known as depression began to crawl back into his heart and leech on his joy. The lack of Marth's presence had a strange effect on Roy. When he was gone for work, Roy did not feel anything. He just knew that Marth would be home eventually. In this situation however, Roy had no knowledge of Marth's current status and whereabouts. Without this knowledge, he did not know whether Marth was safe or not.

In a blink of an eye, Roy was already back home. He did not even remember walking into his house. The only thing he remembered was magically sitting on the couch, like if he never left the house at all. Suddenly brain dead, all he could do was blankly stare at the empty television screen like a traumatized victim. The back of his head cringed at his own thoughts. He was not the victim, Marth was! Why was he so selfish?!

With each passing minute, Roy grew more concerned and anxious about Marth. He knew that Marth was still not found, and if he was kidnapped, that meant that he spent an awfully long, horrible time with his captors. Marth's agony could be longer if he and his friends could not figure out where he was.

The sound of a key sliding into a lock was the first thing that caught Roy's attention. As he looked directly at the door and awaited the visitor, he felt his hopes rising like a balloon. Maybe this was a dream! Maybe Marth was all right all along!

"Roy, I'm home!" Eliwood called as he entered the house, not knowing that he popped Roy's balloon.

Roy just sighed sadly and looked down at the floor. Oh, it was Dad who managed to come back from work early.

Eliwood noticed Roy sitting on the couching with a long face. "Roy, are you ok?" he asked, setting his baggage onto the floor. He went to the sofa and sat next to his son.

"...Yeah." Roy shakily said, wishing that his father would leave him alone.

"You don't sound happy." Eliwood doubted. "Did something happen?"

Roy slowly nodded. "...Yeah. Something happened to Marth..."

"Was it at work? Did an accident occur?"

"N-No." Roy swallowed nervously. "Today, Marth never made it to work."

Eliwood paused for a moment. "Oh..."

"We tried to look for him." Roy continued. "But we couldn't find him. We assume that someone took him."

"I see..." Eliwood was about to add something when he heard Roy sniff loudly.

"I'm worried, Dad." Roy trembled. "I just want Marth back..."

"Come here, Roy." Eliwood wrapped his arms around his son and tightly embraced him. He felt his heart sink when he felt Roy hugging him back and shake in his arms. "Are your friends going to start a search party?"

"Mmmm hmmm."

"Tonight, we can look for him with your friends." Eliwood stated. "Don't worry, we can find him."

Roy just nodded and snuggled closer to his father. Although he felt something warm filling his heart, he ignored it. He knew that a gas was acting as a filler for happiness.

As Marth was being led down a long hallway of cells by his captors, he eyed the fluorescent blue clothing that clothed his body. He was intrigued by the bright blue fabric not because he found it adorning, but because its hue was strangely familiar to him. Of course, he did not find his new outfit to his liking; he found it more to his disliking. Yes, blue was his favorite color, however out of all possible hues of this cool color, the fluorescent one was the color he dreaded the most. He found it associated with self-loathing and horror.

His captors still did not tell Marth where he was. Judging by the appearance and atmosphere of his surroundings; jail cells packed with individuals behind stiff, restrictive bars. While some minded their own business and ignored the unfortunate newcomer, others hopelessly watched the vicious, merciless sheepdogs herd their victim. Looking at the innocent appearance of Marth, they thought to themselves, "How tragic... He is probably another forgotten orphan they picked up from the streets."

Still, the iron bars that confined them and the presence of harsh authority did not prevent a few to warn Marth.

"Hey, kid!" one of the prisoners yelled as he slammed onto the bars to get the bluenette's attention. Marth flinched and looked at the deranged stranger. "You can still escape! This is your last chance! C'mon!"

The workers Ganondorf, Ghirahim, and Hades paused in their path and sternly glared at the individual, who continued to scream at Marth. Still bounded by handcuffs, Marth could only frightfully watch. Judging by the tone of the man's voice, this was a place he should not be in!

"Listen to him!" With a small gasp, Marth looked behind him and spotted a few women, men, and even teenagers close to his age beginning to cry to him. The first man's warning was a fuse that set off an explosive bomb that tried to warn Marth of the incoming disaster. "You're not locked behind bars like us! Run if you still can!"

Marth looked at the shackles around his ankles. Although he could still walk, he probably could not cover so much distance in a short amount of time.

"What are you just standing there?! Do something!"

Gathering his courage, Marth finally made his decision. A strange, animal-like fury in his blood known as adrenaline began to boil in his veins as his heart began to pump the liquid throughout his body. Eying Ganondorf's firm yet slightly loose grip on his handcuffs, Marth suddenly pulled away and slammed Ganondorf's thin ribs with his elbow.

"Yoow!" Ganondorf exclaimed.

"What the—" Hades and Ghirahim looked at the startled Gerudo as Marth began to scurry away as fast as he could. Due to the cuffs that restrained his ankles, Marth knew that one abrupt, large step could send him tumbling onto the ground.

"Get that boy!" Ghirahim exclaimed as he and his coworkers began to chase Marth.

Marth's heart rate and breathing rate began to increase as he heard loud footsteps a creating behind him. Darn those annoying cuffs! If it were not for them, he could run faster without the risk of tripping. Marth looked behind his shoulder to see how far his captors were.

BUMP!

"Ahh!" Marth cried out as he fell onto the cold, flat ground. While running, he suddenly collided with something, or *someone.*

When Marth looked up, he came face-to-face with one of the scariest people he had ever seen. The person he bumped into was an elderly man at the age of... seventy? Eighty? Maybe a century or two? He had dark skin that had a hue of green and winkles from aging and work. At first glance, Marth thought that he needed to go outside and get some fresh air more often. His hair was neatly combed, nearly matching the style of the expensive, dark green overcoat, purple dress shirt, and shiny, black shoes that adorned his body. This expressed his high, mighty status. His eyes, a merciless hazel, glared directly into Marth's cerulean eyes.

Upon inspecting Marth, Gharnef began to recognize several physical appearance of the bluenette. He recognized the fearful, almond-shaped cerulean eyes that gazed fearfully at him, the round cheekbones that gave Marth his youthful appearance, and the hue of the hair that fell over his eyes. The final touch was Marth dressed in the infamous fluorescent blue clothing, which made him look nearly exactly like *him*. The only large difference was Marth was in pure shock and horror when he "first" saw him. When *he* saw him, he was in pure hatred and fury.

"You must be our newest newcomer." Gharnef spoke creepily calmly to Marth.

Before Marth could reply, Ganondorf suddenly came over, grabbed Marth by one of his wrists, and pulled him up onto his feet. Marth yelped as his face turned pink, probably from embarrassment for being recaptured.

"Yes, he is." Ghirahim responded. "Isn't he a beauty? He looks nearly identical to the Masked Slasher!"

"Wait, who?" Marth asked himself, thinking that he misheard.

"Yes, too identical." Hades agreed.

"...The boy is the Masked Slasher." Gharnef spoke.

"Huh?" Hades asked. "Do I have something in my ear?"

"No, I cannot see anything." Ghirahim replied.

"He is?" Ganondorf questioned.

Gharnef ignored Ganondorf's questioned and darkly said to Marth, "It has been months since I last saw you, Marth Lowell."

Marth jumped at the mention of his name. "W-What?!" he quietly gasped in shock. "How do you know my name?"

Once again, Gharnef ignored the question. "Bring him to his cell." he ordered.

"Yes sir." With that, Ganondorf, Ghirahim, and Hades continued to guide Marth down the hallways with Gharnef trailing them. The on looking, jailed persons in their cells could only silence and sadly watch the scene play.

Marth gave Gharnef an alarmed yet suspicious look. "Wait, please tell me who are you!"

"I am Gharnef, the main administrator of this facility." Gharnef answered, hoping that Marth would silence after his answer.

Much to Gharnef's annoyance, Marth asked another question. "Facility? What is this place?"

Gharnef continued to look straight ahead and ignored Marth's question.

"Where am I?" Marth repeated his question, his voice rising. "Where am I?!"

Ghirahim suddenly struck Marth's face with the palm of his hand, earning a high-pitched cry and teary, large eyes from the bluenette. "Stay silent, little boy!" he snapped.

Shaking wildly, Marth tried to hold his tears back. "W-Where am I?" he asked in a softer, higher voice that resembled a scared child's.

"You have the right to stay silent." Ganondorf strictly responded.

As the workers led Marth to the furthest, empty cell away from the other prisoners, Marth gradually began to panic. The cell was awfully empty and terrifying compared to Roy's medium-sized, familiar, warm bedroom. The only thing it had was an average-sized bed. A small, barred window was placed at the furthest wall. It teased the prisoner with its view of freedom.

"I'm s-scared..." Marth said shakily as they approached the entrance of the cell. Hades began to undo the shackles and cuffs on Marth's wrists and ankles. "I'm so scared..."

Seeing that he was unbounded, Marth tried to run and escape, only to have Ghirahim and Ganondorf hold him down.

"Let me go!" Marth exclaimed hysterically as he struggled against the workers' stronger grasp. "I don't like you! Let me go!"

Ganondorf and Ghirahim violently shoved Marth into his cell. As soon as Marth fell clumsily onto the ground, the quickly shut and locked the barred doors. "Our job is complete, right boss?" they asked.

"Yes, your job is compete." Gharnef answered, allowing his men to leave and do whatever they please. He continued to watch Marth, who unevenly got up to his feet and rushed towards the door.

With a loud grunt, Marth grabbed onto the door's iron bars and began to pull on them, hoping that it would open. When the effort failed to work, Marth banged onto the door with his fists in frustration before sinking onto the floor, sobbing uncontrollably. He dearly wanted to go home; he did not want to stay in this cold, merciless facility. Besides, what was this place? His captors only mentioned that it was a facility. But, what did it do? Who were his captors?

Gharnef only continued to cooly watch the bluenette's angst. To him, it was quite strange, as Marth had a much more different personality. Although he closely resembled *him*, Marth had no memory of living in the insane asylum. But why? Was this "Marth" coincidentally physically identical to the notorious serial killer? Or was this the Masked Slasher himself who somehow lost his memories?

His sobs ceasing, Marth looked up at Gharnef with miserable puppy eyes. "I w-want to go home..." he whimpered weakly.

"Home?" Gharnef coldly responded. "You never had a home. You belong with us." he said, before walking away, leaving Marth alone in his tiny cell.

Sniffing, Marth weakly got up and shivered as a breeze flew into the room from the window. In an effort to comfort himself, Marth trudged towards the bed, got into it, and snuggled in the thin covers. Although the blanket provided little warmth, its softness gave Marth a sense of comfort. Due to his trauma, Marth suddenly felt sleepy. As his eyelids fluttered shut, he saw a brief vision of a familiar-looking child's room.

What was that place? Was I there before? Maybe I...

Author's Notes: My catfish's name is Elvis!

OT: Here's the long 21st chapter! I hope that I can explain how the asylum treated the "insane". TBH, I feel that I'm not developing the bad guys enough. However, they will appear in future chapters! The next chapters will be about Marth's past, so keep on reading!

Also, I opened a new poll asking what fanfic should I start next, so please check it out and vote! (Unless if you're a guess. You can mention your choice in your review if you want to.)

Story Questions:

How should Marth escape from the asylum?

How do you think Marth's past was like?

(Maybe a spoiler question, but people already suspected it.) What do you think made Marth into serial killer?

Chapter 22: Chapter 22

Unable to sleep, Marth tossed and turned wildly in his bed. The demons that plagued his restless mind included today's exhausting, torturous, unrewarding events. No matter how hard he tried to swat the buzzing monsters with calmer, happier thoughts, the monsters would simply fly out of the way and continue to torment him. Sighing, Marth rolled onto his side and peered around his room.

If a little child were to enter his room, they would be amazed by its sheer size and its furniture. Marth's room was nearly like a prince's. Set between the two, tall windows was his luxurious bed, which had the fluffiest and most comfortable cushions and blankets. Across the bed was a large, wide television screen. Its remote control sat on its stand, covered in dust. The television sat in between two, towering bookshelves. The one on the right contained books of all genres, while the one on the left held Marth's toys. Across Marth's bed from the right was a dresser with his clothing. Hung on the dresser's handles was his school uniform. In the front of the left shelf was a large, planar mirror. Next to the bookshelf was a desk piled with books, papers, and binders. By the desk's side was the door, which led to the hallway.

Marth finally decided that he could not sleep for the time being. He threw his heavy covers away and quietly got out of his bed. If he was caught staying awake after his bedtime, he would be harshly punished! His large pillow was messily covered by his blanket. If someone were to wander into his room and check on him, he would assume that Marth was still asleep like the good boy he was supposed to be. Marth cautiously crept to his dresser, opened the bottom drawer, and rummaged through his socks and spare blankets before finally uncovering his sketchbook, the most offensive symbol to his father. He then tip-toed out of his room and warily looked around the hallway for any sighs of his family, especially his parents.

Deciding that it was safe to go, Marth snuck down the hallway. He passed by his older sister's bedroom, which was as still as its doorknob. When he approached the stairs, he walked by his parents' bedroom, which happened to be the center of their discussion.

"I'm disappointed in Marth." Marth heard his father say sternly. A bit terrified, Marth set the side of his ear on the door and began to listen into the conversation. "When I heard that his intelligence is above average, I expected him to excel in seventh grade!"

"Cornelius, Marth is only eleven." Liza responded. "He should be in sixth grade."

"I don't want Marth to take the easy path and waste time!" Cornelius retorted. "I want him to complete his education at an early age. The acting industry would love him!"

Marth began to tremble as he continued to eavesdrop. It was the same, heart-retching subject. From generation to generation, most of the male members of the Lowell family were involved in acting. His father was known throughout the world for starring in a famous movie.

"I think Marth is not working hard enough." Cornelius continued. "Do you know what he has in his classes? Only one A, six Bs, and one C! He can do better than that!"

"Honey, I see Marth turning in his assignments for school." Liza tried to protest.

"But, does he study?" Marth flinched at the angry tone of his father's voice. Cornelius's question was answered by a moment of silence. "Just what I thought. Marth can be at the top of his class if he works harder. Had you heard of Chrom's daughter Lucina? She is the same age as Marth and quite successful in school! Also, Elice is currently one of the top students in her class!"

Cringing, Marth quietly hurried away and went down the stairs with tears in his eyes. He did not want to listen to the conversation anymore.

Once when he was downstairs, Marth crept pass a towering, glass shelf filled with several glistering awards and trophies given to the youths of the Lowell family. Much to Marth's unrewarding, hard work, the majority of the awards belonged to Elice. Only a few were painstakingly earned by Marth when he was five, an age when he cared less about fame. Clutching his sketchbook tightly, Marth tried to not look at the discouraging, hopeless shelf as he walked down the family room and quietly opened the two, magnificent doors that led to the vast backyard.

Stepping outside, Marth carefully shut the doors behind him and looked around for a perfect hiding place. His eyes immediately caught a large tree that sat near his parents' bedroom and efficiently blocked their window. Careful not to run and wake up the sleeping Arcanines next door, Marth silently walked towards the base of the tree. He sat against the stiff, supporting tree trunk and opened his sketchbook.

The sketchbook had a few, odd sketches manly drawn in pencil. Looking around his surroundings for any watching eyes, Marth began to doodle a simple drawing of a person. The only sounds he heard were the occasional vroom of a passing car, the wind blowing against him and rustling through the drifting, autumn leaves, and the sound of the tip of his pencil scratching against the flat paper.

Upon finishing his drawing, Marth admired it. Yes, he did improve compared to his previous drawings. However, this did not mean that he was satisfied with the outcome. The person's head was still terribly large on his little shoulders, his right arm was larger than the left, his hands resembled a mutated flower, and finally the person's body seemed stiff like a standing slate of rock.

"I think I improved." Marth thought to himself as he continued to glare at his sketch. *"I just need a little more practice, time, and guidance. If only Father allowed me to take art classes."* Marth tightly clutched his fists at the thought. *"...I do not want to take drama... I just want to truly express myself!"* Trying to hold back tears, Marth buried his face into his trembling hands. *"Why does everyone want me to become someone I am not?!"*

Marth lightly bit on his lips as a single tear rolled down his face. No, he could not sob, cry, or weep! Boys and men did not cry! He needed to get used to holding everything in! In the future, there are some moments when he could not let it out.

Lunchtime was a moment for students to take a break, enjoy their lunches, and spend time with their friends. For Marth however, it was thirty minutes of sitting alone, eating in silence and watching obnoxious cliques interact with their chatty peers. Seated in a lonely table placed at the corner of the cafeteria, Marth quietly ate his meal, which included two mini burgers, a small carton of milk, and a brownie.

Sipping his milk, Marth was suddenly struck in the head with a baby carrot. His brows lowering into a glare, Marth glowered at the noisy, rowdy table that seated his peers, which included Owain, Ingio, Robin, and Lucina. The four were happily hanging out and talking so hard, the entire cafeteria could hear them. Their situation was the complete opposite of Marth's

Marth hurriedly looked away, refusing to meet his cousin's gaze. Like him, Lucina was a student gifted with high intelligence for her age, allowing her to bump up a grade. Although she nearly looked identical to Marth; azure hair, cerulean eyes, and skinny build, her status in school was white compared to Marth's black. Everyone admired her like an idol! She was a living, idealized, fictional character who had it all; she was never rejected, injured mentally or physically, overlooked, nor regarded as a failure.

Although Marth worked tirelessly to achieve goals similar to Lucina's, his efforts resulted in the opposite of what he intended for. If he were to study all night for a test, he would either get a B, or a high score that would not be recognized by others. Why? Because he was not Lucina. Of course, Lucina's friends were probably not as "intelligent" as her, but they still admired her for her reputation unlike Marth. Marth was like an x-ray. He could see through people's phoniness. Even though it was not physically over her face, Marth could see a transparently brief outline of a mask covering her true colors. Even though Marth could like to point it out to other people, he knew that it was an unwise idea. His outspoken statement could lead him to persecution.

Unable to stand Lucina and her cronies' presence, Marth hurriedly finished his lunch and left the cafeteria. It was mentally painful seeing someone who you do not quite like having a greater time than you.

Where should he go? He only had a few minutes. Maybe he could go to the library and try to finish some homework. However, his homework usually took him hours to finish. He might as well go to his next class and loiter until the bell rung.

While Marth stood in the middle of the hallway and thought of a decision, he did not hear two bullies creeping up to him.

"Hey!" a voice shouted as a hand roughly shoved Marth from behind. With a cry, Marth stumbled for a few moments before glaring at his tormentors. Two cousins, one thin as a tree branch and garbed in purple and the other as chubby as a Wailord dressed in yellow glanced mercilessly at the bluenette.

"I didn't-a do it! He did it!" Wario accused Waluigi when Marth gave him a sharp glare.

"No, he did-a it!" Waluigi pointed at Wario.

Marth sighed softly to himself in annoyance. Wario and Waluigi loved to torment him, whether it was during lunch, before school, or after school. But why? Marth never did anything bad to them. Marth attempted to walk away from the two bullies, only to have them surround him.

"Hey, why are you-a leaving so soon?" Wario asked snidely as he stepped on Marth's left shoe. As Marth "stepped out" or his shoes and came to realization, Waluigi extended his leg in front of his path, causing the unfortunate bluenette to stumble onto the ground with a short cry. As the bullying continued, several students passed by the scene without a care. Since they did not know Marth, his problems did not matter to them. Tough luck.

During Wario's and Waluigi's horrendous, mocking sneering, tears began to wield in Marth's eyes. Waluigi immediately noticed it and pointed out, "Aw, are you crying? I thought-a boys don't cry!"

"He's a sixth grader who-a jumped up-a a grade! Of course he's gonna cry! He's a baby!" Wario remarked rudely. "He's not an eighth grader like us!"

"Leave me alone..." Marth could only whimper.

"C'mon, is that-a what you only got?" Waluigi responded. "I thought-a that you are going to take-a an anime sword and beat us up!"

"Or transform-a into a Magical Boy!" Wario added fuel to the fire. "C'mon Marth-kun, are you just-a gonna crrrry?" Wario began to imitate Marth's begging using overused Japanese quotes. "Gomenesai! Gomenesai! I will nakanaide!"

"If you don't stop, then I'll tell Onee-chan everything!" Waluigi taunted.

Just as when Marth was about to erupt into tears, the bell suddenly rung.

"Crap, the bell!" Wario growled before turning to Marth with a snide smirk. "We'll be-a leaving now! See ya later, Martha!"

Marth shakily got up and wiped his tears on his sleeve as the two bullies hurried away from the scene to avoid trouble. Students immediately poured out of the cafeteria like a leak in a large bucket. Without wasting a moment, Marth quickly out on his backpack and hurried to his next class. He dreaded bumping into another irritating person.

When Marth arrived back home, the first thing he did was hurry upstairs to his room. There, he plopped his book bag onto the floor next to his desk. With an exhausted sigh, the bluenette plopped onto his bed and glared at the ceiling fan.

He wanted to take a break. He wanted to either turn on the TV and watch some entertaining shows or play with his DS, which sat in a shelf covered with layers of dust. Yet, he was prohibited. A restraint known as his father's strict rules was tied around his ankle, preventing him from coming a step closer to his desire. With a frustrated sigh, Marth got off his bed, took his books and binders out of his bag, placed them on his desk, and began to start in his homework.

He decided to start on his math homework. When he opened his notebook and skimmed through his notes, he assumed that his homework was going to be quite easy. The problems were as simple as sketching a small picture. Speaking of sketching... Marth glanced at his dresser, where his sketchbook was hidden. Marth had a funny feeling that someone watched him sneak into the backyard to draw. He did not know who, he just sensed a pair of eyes glaring disapprovingly at his activities.

Confident that he was going to finish his math problems, Marth opened his thick textbook and flipped to the assigned page. He glanced at the first problem, which read: Redx + 2Sky x log24/dog = eTree and clouds. Marth blinked awkwardly and checked his notebook for reference. His written examples included 4x + 7 = -8x - 2. It was a simple problem. Why were the examples so primitive compared to those complicated problems?

A ball chain latched around Marth's willingness to complete his work. When he was about to shove aside the tedious work and begin another assignment, he heard merciless, intimidating footsteps entering his room. Marth's cerulean eyes kept his eyes on his math homework, too scared to look up at his visitor. The slow, vicious footstep was a trademark of his cold father Cornelius.

Feeling his father's eyes staring harshly at him, Marth took a piece of lined paper out and tried to get started on his math homework. Maybe if he pretended to do this tough assignment, his father might assume that he understood the subject! Marth shakily wrote down the first problem and attempted to solve it. He tried to avoid looking into his father's heartless gaze. Let's see... Maybe he should multiply 2Sky and log24/dog first before subtracting it. Hold on... He should multiply both sides by dog first to make things easier for him.

After a few moments, Marth heard his father slowly step out of his room. The sense of anxiety, not relief entered his nervous system. Yes, his father was not watching him. However, that did not mean that he was out of the woods yet. Too scared to stop, Marth continued on his perplexing, confusing mark problems.

An hour passed as Marth finally finished his last math problem. Slamming his textbook shut, he stuffed his homework

into his binder and prepared to start his history assignment, which was making a timeline of events. A thick, folded, large paper was spread across his desk.

Just was when was about to write the first event, Marth's concentration was interrupted by the sound of the front door opening and closing. A star flickering in his eyes, Marth paused for a few moments as he listened to soft, light footsteps walking up the stairs. Could it be...? Marth quietly got off his seat and peeked out the door.

He saw a fifteen-year-old teen with long azure hair and kind cerulean eyes similar to his. For the first time today, Marth smiled softly to himself. He correctly identified the footsteps as Elice's.

"Ummm... Hi, Elice!" Marth greeted quietly as he exited his room.

"Oh! Hey, Marth! How are you are doing?" Elice asked with a warm, caring smile, a smile his parents never gave to him.

Marth quickly reminisced the torturous, lonely day at school before answering, "Good!" he answered with a smile that acted as a persona. "What about you?"

"I'm fine, I—" Elice's reply was interrupted by the buzzing vibration of her cell phone sitting in her jean pocket. Without wasting a single minute and a word to Marth, she immediately took the device out of her pocket and answered the caller. "Hey, what's up?" she asked as she strolled into her room, turning her back towards Marth. "Oh nothing, I just arrived back home. How about you...?"

Elice shut the door, leaving Marth completely alone in the hallway. Disappointment swelled in his heart along with frustration and jealously. Marth hardly saw Elice, either because the two were too busy with schoolwork or Elice spending time with her boyfriend, who had higher priority than Marth. Marth could not understand the logic programmed in his older sister. Unlike her boyfriend, who was just some teenage boy who happened to like her, Marth was closely related to her by blood! What made her boyfriend more precious than him?!

Glaring angrily at the door that led to his sister's room, Marth furiously stormed back into the room and slammed the door behind him.

A tiny jolt caused Marth to awake. Opening his eyes, cerulean eyes peered around the pitch-black surroundings. Moonlight shined through the uncovered windows, adding distorted silhouettes of the furniture across the walls, ground, and the ceiling. A bit annoyed that he got up too later, Marth glanced at the clock that sat on his nightstand. It read 11:45.

Strangely, Marth's heart was providing rapidly, despite the fact that he did not have a terrifying nightmare. Yes, his life was strict and harsh compared to other boys'. He perfectly fitted the definition of a loner, someone who had no one to come to for help. However, his hard life usually did not contribute to his bank account in his subconsciousness. When Marth slept, he usually did not dream. His subconsciousness probably knew that dreams were useless, as they never came true for the bluenette.

Then why was he jolted awake? When Marth had trouble sleeping, he usually spent two hours struggling to fall asleep to no avail.

The sound of covers being thrown off whipped in the air. Even though it did not know what caused him to awake, Marth knew that he did not need to spend ten minutes of fruitlessly tossing to know that he could not fall asleep. He decided to spend his time wisely.

Like before, Marth piled the covers over his pillow before opening the lower drawer of his dresser. The sketchbook was in its exact location: hidden underneath some spare blankets. Marth picked it up and tip-toed out of his room.

He carefully turned the door knob, which squeaked quietly. When Marth gently pushed the door opened, it creaked slightly, catching Marth off-guard. Marth froze like an ice cube. His sympathetic nervous system racing in alarm, he could only hear his heart beating hysterically and his soft yet rapid breathing. Did anyone hear that?! Maybe he should turn back and stay in his room...

The night was completely still as Marth himself. There was not a sound of someone waking up to the hair-raising noise, nor footsteps heading up the stairs. Marth's heartbeat began to cease, slowly calming down. Maybe the noise was too quiet!

Assuming that it was safe, Marth stealthily snuck down the hallways. His soft footsteps on the carpet were the only thing he heard. Despite the tranquilly, the back of Marth's head desperately warned Marth to turn back. Something was wrong! However, Marth ignored the dreadful feeling.

Like its puppet however, the back of his head was part that was always outspoken and ignored.

Just as when Marth approached the stairs, the frightening, cold gaze of identical, cerulean eyes greeted him at the bottom of the stairs. He halted in shock and terror. The expression of a deer caught in headlights formed on his face; his hands were caught in the cookie jar.

Cornelius used his infamous move Mean Look on his terrified, stunned son, preventing the younger male from fleeing the scene. "What are you doing, Marth?" he growled the question.

"Oh, F-Father!" Marth exclaimed nervously, his voice shaking. "I could not sleep! Please forgive me!"

His sharp eyes noticing the sketchbook clutched in Marth's tense hands, Cornelius went up the stairs. His thundering footsteps was the earthquake that made Marth back into a corner. "What is that?" Cornelius asked, his voice rising.

"It's... Homework for school." Marth lied anxiously, hoping that his father would let him be. His father was not the kind of person he would like to bump into the middle of the night. When sleep deprived, he could be quite bad-tempered and prone to violence.

Not believing his son, Cornelius suddenly pulled the book out of Marth's hands and quickly skimmed through its contents, his anger increasing with the number of pages he flipped. "Father!" Marth tried to speak up, his cerulean eyes filling with desperation. "I—!"

"You have been drawing!?" Cornelius questioned in fury. "No wonder why you are not doing well in school!"

"Father, I ask you to listen!" Marth protested. "I've been drawing during my leisure time! Also, I am working as hard as I could in school!"

Cornelius suddenly slammed the book over in Marth's face. Stars and sparks flew in Marth's sight. As Marth cried out in pain, Cornelius ruthlessly dropped his sketchbook onto the ground, grabbed him by his thin shoulders, and savagely pushed him against the wall.

"I expected my son to do better than this." Cornelius spoke harshly to Marth, his grip tightening. Marth whimpered helplessly and looked fearfully back at his father. "You cannot become a great actor if you have a C in drama!"

"Father, please understand! I do not want to be an actor! I want to be an artist!" Marth gasped loudly after when he blurted out the three sentences.

"You. Cannot. Be. An. Artist!" Cornelius yelled as he threw Marth onto the ground. He turned to his son's sketchbook and stomped on it, ruining it.

"Father, don't!" Marth exclaimed, his eyes filling with tears.

"Dear, what is going on?" Liza asked when he hurried up the stairs.

Cornelius turned to his wife with a burning blaze in his eyes. "I caught Marth attempting to sneak away to draw! Do you not know what this means? This means he wants to be an artist!"

"So?" Liza was tired of her husband recurring rants about Marth's future career.

"The income of an artist is not as high as an actor's." Cornelius gazed at Marth, who shakily picked up his sketchbook and inspected the damage. "I do not understand why Marth does not want to be an actor! Acting, like drawing, is a form of art. If he desires a successful future, he should pursuit an acting career!"

Liza only nodded. Marth's anguish tears blurred his vision. Why was no one stepping up for him?

"Father, I want a job that I enjoy." Marth spoke up, his voice shaky. "Are you happy with your job? When grandfather forced you to be an actor, did you let him step over you? Did you even try to convince him?"

"Stay out of this conversation, Marth." Cornelius only bluntly said. "Tomorrow after school, we are going to have a serious discussion.

With that statement made, Cornelius and Liza entered their bedchambers. Liza only gave Marth a sympathetic look, which was a bandage too small to cover Marth's fatal mental wounds. Unable to hold it in, Marth began to weep softly to himself as he began to walk back to his bedroom, unevenly holding his battered sketchbook. Before stepping into his quarters, he heard a soft, unnoticeable sound of a door shutting behind him. Another wound was inflicted on Marth's

heart. Elice was watching the scene all along.

As he went to his bed, the crumbled, ripped pages of his sketchbook began to fall onto the ground like snow along with his tears. Giving the book one last glance, Marth dumped it onto the ground before collapsing onto his bed. He bit on his lips, trying to hold back a sob.

Why was his life like this? Was it because he was born as Marth Lowell, an avatar that was etched permanently in stone? Was he fated to go through loneliness, rejection, humiliation, and disapproval? As depressing, frustration-inducing memories ran through his mind, Marth screamed in rage, grabbed onto his azure tuffs, and pulled on it. Maybe if he tried hard enough, he could magically transform into another person! He could turn into someone who was actually liked, accepted, and respected!

Click.

Something snapped in Marth's brain. His cries ceasing, Marth released the strands of his hair and glanced at the mirror. He saw an identical boy look back at him. However, he sensed that there was something awfully different. Was it in his eyes? Instead of simply looking back, the reflection was *glaring* at him.

Thinking that his emotions were getting the best of him, Marth looked away. He got underneath his covers, pulled it over his body, and tried to go to sleep. As he shut his eyes, he felt a strange, twitching feeling crawling in his stomach, heart, and head.

Author's Notes: Welcome to middle school, Marth.

OT: I know that I've been saying this in author's notes a lot, but I am still going to say it: please excuse the errors made in this chapter. I was actually in a hurry when I uploaded this.

If you hadn't figured it out by now, this chapter is about Marth's past, so don't confuse the past with the present! The next chapter (or chapters) are going to have violence and character deaths, so be on the lookout!

As for the poll, the Shulk fanfic has the most votes. I'm still going to open the poll in case anyone wants to change fate.

Story Questions:

Would you rather be an artist or an actor?

Do you think it is possible for someone to "have it all"?

Why do you think Cornelius wants Marth to be an actor?

(You don't have to answer this.) Any suggestions on who should be Marth's murder victims in future chapters? I can only think of four.

Chapter 23: Chapter 23

When the bell rang throughout the hallways, students of all grades instantly flooded out of their classes. Among the students was Marth, who was squeezing through cliques clotting the hallway like a cork on a bottle. What was with them? It was the end of school, so shouldn't they start heading back home?

Marth never liked cliques. To most people, cliques were a group of close friends. To cliques, other cliques were other friends who they did not know as well. To Marth, they were just statues. Yes, they looked like people but they never respond to you. They were always fixed in a permanent position. With thousands of statues in the hallway, it was a bit difficult to move them out of the way, unless if you were a superhuman.

Bump! Just as when he was exiting the school, Marth's elbow accidentally struck an passing eighth grader's ribs.

"Hey! Excuse me!" she shouted.

Marth gave the girl a cold, sharp glare before continuing his way. As he went down the steps, Marth internally froze in jolt. Did he really look at the girl like that? Usually when he accidentally bumped into someone, he would quickly apologize. Why did he do that? A twinge of guilt swelled in Marth's heart. He was really mean, wasn't he?

No, you were not mean. Didn't you see? That girl was totally rude, she deserved it!

But, she might've had a bad day. I should not make it worse!

Are you caring for a person who does not matter in your life? She does not matter! She never did anything to help you!

Yeah, but she's a human like me.

She is not a human. She is a monster.

Marth's eyes widened at the sudden thought he magically produced with his own mind. Why did he think of that? Yes, that girl was a human. She had a head, hands, legs, fingers, toes, and a personality. How could she not be a human, but yet a monster? Unlike humans, monsters were incomprehensible, deformed mutants that held a grudge against humans since the beginning of time.

As Marth tried to solve his question, he looked up the sky and noticed clustered, gray clouds gathering behind the sun for a small meeting. It looked like it was going to rain. Much to Marth's relief, he was wearing a jet black raincoat, so he did not need to worry about getting wet.

A nearby, public elementary school across the street was what caught Marth's attention when he turned a corner. Unlike his peers who held no interest for the common people and their lifestyles, Marth was quite intrigued by the children who went there. As far back as his limited, conscious memory could recall, he went to a private elementary school. Every day after school, Marth would just walk back home alone with some of the other children. Their uniform, which consisted of a white collared shirt, black dress shoes, and dark, navy blue pants or skirts, was what separated them from the public school. That did not meant they were close friends. Marth remembered walking behind his peers in silence.

Private school was completely different from public school. Everyone was strictly disciplined and forcefully crushed, squished, and smashed to fit the mold. An icy finger touched Marth's right hand as he fearfully remember the time he refused to sit down in his seat. The back of his hands were struck by a flat ruler in retribution. Although it happened years ago, Marth could still remember the humiliation, shame, and pain he went through that day.

Currently, Marth was in middle school; a private middle school. They still used the strict discipline on their students; it was not seen very often however, mainly because the students were already grinder into raw beef for the sake of their future. That did not mean everyone was the perfect cookie shaped by the cutter. Some could not do as well as others, either because they definitely did not want to, or it was in their character.

"Dad! Dad!" Marth heard a young child exclaim cheerfully from across the street. He spotted two redheads walking to their car. Gently held in the little boy's small hands was a sloppy yet colorful drawing. "What do you think of my drawing?"

The father looked at his son's drawing as he unlocked his car. "I really like it! Good job!"

"Really? Thank you, Dad!" the boy shouted happily.

Marth smiled slightly at the sight. Public schools were strange places to Marth. They were mysterious alternative universe to his life. Yes, they did have a mold. But, it was simplistic enough for the children to fit in! They were not part of

a manufacturing company!

"If only I was born in a family like his." Marth thought to himself as his smile slowly fell. He watched the car drive away before continuing his way.

When Marth finally arrived back home, he was greeted by the angry and disputing yells from his parents. With a tiny whimper, Marth stood in front of the doorway as he listened to his father furiously washing his wife's objections away with his powerful waves of fury. His mother's protests were as efficient as picking grains of sand while wearing boxing gloves. Stubbornness was another atrocious vice Cornelius had. Despite the number of reasons why he was wrong, Cornelius's hands were too big to pick them up and examine them, that is if he had the patience.

After a few seconds, Marth hurriedly raced up the stairs towards his room in fear. He did not need to listen to his parents' arguments to know what they were fighting over. They were like a broken program; they repeatedly repeat the same mistakes.

Marth slammed the door shut, the bang erupting through the empty hallway like if a bomb suddenly burst, destroying the peace. Covering his ears, he carelessly dumped his book bag onto the floor next to his desk before throwing himself onto his bed. Shaky hands reached for the covers and pulled it over the bluenette's body in effort to douse the sound. The argument however, managed to slip underneath the door's cracks, allowing Marth to barely hear the conversation.

His parents' arguments always confused Marth. Yes, not all relationships were perfect. A resolution to an issue usually required an argument. In his parents' case however, their arguments knocked over a roll of domino blocks. Each argument always corresponded to another one.

Why was the relationship between his parents marred, covered with tears and blood? They were not poor. They were actually quite wealthy! In comparison to lower class families, they had nothing financially to worry about.

Maybe they married for wealth, not love. Marth did not know how his parents met and why they married, but he assumed that the two adults were attracted by the size of their lover's banks, not their opposite, attractive charge that held them together. Cornelius and Liza had the same charge, which repulsed them.

"What day is today?" Marth asked himself as he crawled out of his covers. He looked at a calendar sitting on his desk, and a beam of disgust flashed in between of his eyes. "N-No... Today's Wednesday! That means... That witch is coming over!"

His hands shaking, Marth sat downstairs on a sofa, his body slightly trembling in fear. His father and mother sat next to each other, which was a bit odd to him. Usually after a large argument, his parents avoided each other. This was a rare moment seeing them together. However, were they happy? Marth glanced quickly at his mother and father. Cornelius was impatiently gazing at his gold, expensive watch that wrapped around his right wrists while Liza quietly looked at the door. No, they did not seem happy.

Marth hardly saw his family happy together. Whenever they got together, the only emotions they painted on their face were grief, disappointment, anger, and selfishness. When was the last time they actually felt joy? Marth dug into his memories. He could not recall a single, precious moment. Most of the time, his family were working diligently in order to achieve their dreams. Their belief was they could achieve true happiness when they finally reach their goals.

But what about family gatherings and holidays? Although they seemed joyful and sociable in the presence of others, Marth sensed that they were actually putting a mask on. If they were to walk into a party with a large frown, people would look at them funny like if they had a problem with them. In order to be accepted, they needed to put on a mask no matter the circumstances.

His hands shaking, Marth took a quick look at Cornelius, debating whether if he should feel glad if she did not come. Yes, there would be no lesson and he could just spend the rest of his day finishing homework and studying. However, that would exceed his father's limited patience. He might erupt onto his mother again! Marth dreaded to see his poor mother in that helpless, pitiful state.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Marth's face turned a deathly pale as the thundering bangs went off into the room. "No... Please..." He thought to himself frightfully as he watched his mother get the door. "Please don't be her!"

"Hello, Miss Cia!" Liza spoke, trying to sound cheery and worriless. "How has your day been?"

"Pretty well, I suppose." Cia answered as she stepped into the Lowell's house.

Sadly, it was her. With large, deer eyes, Marth defenselessly looked up at the white-haired, amethyst-eyed women. She was dressed in an expensive, dark violet suit. Hanging on her thin shoulders was a large, black, leather handbag. Although it seemed like an ordinary bag for women, if one like Marth knew its contents, he or she would get chills of fear wriggling down the spine at the sight of it.

Cornelius got out of his seat straightaway and hurriedly left the house with Liza rushing to catch up to him. "Six, right?"

"At six." Cia replied with an eerie smile as the door slammed shut. Once when Marth's parents were out of sight, she sighed in frustration to herself. Great! She needed to spend two hours with another little brat!

Marth miserably looked at the wool, red rug that adorned the living room's flat floor. His parents were currently in a new movie. Since it was nearly finished, Cornelius wanted to finish it as soon as he can, so he could start on his next movie. He hatred keeping his coworkers waiting (Actually, he hated waiting in general!), which explains his impatience. Why couldn't he take a few seconds to say goodbye to his own son? Did his job mattered more to him?

"They didn't say goodbye..." Marth huffed through his nose.

"There you are, Marth!" Cia spoke when she spotted Marth sitting on the coach alone. She set her bag onto the sofa and gave the quiet, scared male a sharp, intimidating glare, which was frightening enough to make young men run to the hills. "Did you practice on your facial expressions?"

Marth froze. Due to homework from school, he did not quite have enough time to practice. "...Yes." he lied.

"Show it to me." Cia strictly ordered. "You are angry! Show how angry you are!"

Trying to hide his fear, Marth tried to gaze at his private tutor and create the lividest façade to impress her. He clenched his teeth, lowered his thin, blue brows, widened his fearful, cerulean eyes, and made a small growl. However, it was not enough for Cia. She could see Marth's facial muscles straining pathetically to create an angry appearance. Marth did not practice at all, not even once! If he did, the expression would have come naturally!

"You didn't practice." Cia bluntly and sternly voice, her tone bursting with disappointment.

Marth froze. If his tutor found out he did not practice, the consequence would be...! His fake façade slowly crumbling, Marth tried to repair it. No, he could not reveal his fear to Cia! She would discover the truth!

"I did." Marth simply responded. "Did I not try hard enough?"

Cia thought for a while. "Let's try a different expression. You're happy! Laugh to show your audience how happy you are!"

Marth shakily forced an unsure, timid smile as he laughed nervously. "...Hahahaha...ha." he giggled softly. He was laughing; he could imitate a shy person chortling! This should be acceptable!

Unfortunately, Cia did not accept it as happiness. "No, you're doing it incorrectly! You're supposed to be louder!" she remarked as her voice rose. Her patience was inversely proportional with her frustration.

"Well, I could be a shy person laughing." Marth uneasily suggested.

"You cannot impersonate a shy person!" Cia retorted. "Hadn't you been watching movies?! The main character is never shy! If you want to be a star in a movie, you have to be bold! You have to be expressive!" Cia continued with her lesson. "Someone just hit you in the stomach! You're hurt!"

This should be easy to Marth. Whenever he did something against his father's wills and expectations, either his face, back, or stomach was met with his powerful, demolishing fist or open palm. His face twisted as he pretended to clutch his lower abdomen.

"...Ow..." he shakily said.

Cia was still displeased with Marth's efforts. Mumbling angry words to herself, she opened her bag and took a long whip. Before Marth could react, she lashed the quick, thin weapon at his shinny body without warning. Tears began to fill his eyes even before the weapon came in contact. The whip struck him on his left shoulder. Marth erratically gasped and clutched his stinging shoulder as his blue bangs covered his wounded eyes.

"You need to be louder! Don't you know what the word 'loud' means?!" Cia scolded in wrath as she struck Marth with the

whip again.

"Ack!" Marth cried out in pain. "...I thought I was loud enough..." he sniveled with large eyes.

Cia did not heed to Marth's agony. "Your loved one recently died, and you are thinking about her! You're sad! How are you going to tell the audience that you're sad?"

That was an easy request for Marth. With a shaky whimper, Marth allowed his tears to leak out of his eyes, tumble down his red face, and drip onto the floor. His erratic, beating heart began to ache, like if someone sliced opened his chest and slowly sliced the thin muscles surrounded it. The only noise he heard was the sound of his own sobbing.

Kneel, collapse. Marth curled into a tight ball as he continued to wail loudly. It was not because he was pretending that one of his loved ones passed away, it was because he was in peril, mental pain!

Cia watched Marth's supposed, imitated agony for a few moments before saying, "Good job, Marth Lowell. This was what I expected from you."

As he wrote down an answer to a math problem, Marth rubbed the burning ache on his left arm. It felt like if scraped his bare arm quickly on a rough piece of sandpaper. Biting his lips, Marth tried to ignore it. The pain was not bad! At least until he got into the shower.

When his acting lesson with Cia ended and his parents arrived back home, Marth overheard his tutor talking to his parents. The conversation was not a content, optimistic one. His ears caught Cia remarking that he was not trying hard enough.

Contrary to his parents' and tutor's belief, Marth was trying. The truth is, Marth Lowell simply could not create a strong façade on his building. If he was sad, then he was sad. He could not be happy, no matter how hard Cia struck him with her awful whip.

Marth knew he needed to stand up for himself. He could not be a doormat forever! But, how could he do that? Throughout his life, he was trained to obey his parents' orders like a robot. A robot could not think for itself. Besides, every time he tried to stand up on his feet, his own emotions would get the best of him and shove him down! He cannot create a fake persona to get what he wanted!

Strength. A little person could not build a building without the help of other little people, unless if no one wanted to contribute to his project. He would be left alone in the quarry, helplessly dragging an enormous hunk of slate to the site. It would be a matter of time before the project was completed. If he was larger, then he could simply carry the building block with ease. His project might be finished in just a few hours.

"If only I was stronger."

Warning! There is a violent scene in this part of the chapter! Viewer discretion is advised.

"...If only I was stronger..." Marth blankly mumbled to himself as he walked back home from school.

Life in school has not gotten better for poor Marth. As a student who was friendless, lonely, and looked down, school was a repetitive, boring process for him. What was the point of going somewhere where he did not belong? Did he go there just for his parents' wishes and to waste time?

School did offer education, which could help him later in life. But, how could he use algebra in an acting career? Unless if he was pretending to be a math teacher, the fact did not make sense. The same question applied with science. Science was a tad easier. He could be a mad scientist. On the other hand, mad scientists tend to not follow logic.

No, Marth did not go to school just for education. School was meant with dealing with irritating, heartless people and loneliness. It did not matter how popular you were in school. In some point in your life, people would just leave you alone in the dark for a long period of time. Might as well deal with the pain now, so it would not hurt as much later.

As Marth walked down the street, he was completely trapped in his thoughts, allowing Wario and Waluigi stealthily follow him.

"Hey, are we near-a the junkyard?" Waluigi asked.

Wario pointed at the corner of the street. "Just right-a at the end-a!"

"Should we start-a now?"

"Yes." Wario picked up an empty soda can lying carelessly on the ground and chunked it at Marth. Although it failed to hit the target, it was close enough for Marth to turn around and face his tormentors in shock.

"Hey-a Martha!" Wario shouted as he and Waluigi rushed to the bluenette.

Marth's face was white like snow. "...Erm, h-hey guys." He nervously greeted. Usually, he would run away at the sight of the bullies. This time however, he wanted to stand up to his fears. Yet, his effort was already being to fail.

"Aren't you gonna run away-a?" Waluigi smirked. "Run away back-a to your Onee-chan?"

Marth anxiously yet bravely stood his ground. "N...No..."

"Then what-a are you gonna do-a?" Wario asked. "Fight?"

"I..." Before Marth could replay, Waluigi suddenly walked behind him, grabbed him by the hands, and held them behind his back. "Uwaa! What are you d-doing?!" he exclaimed in shock as he tried to free himself from the bully's grasp.

"Just stay quiet and-a follow us." Wario ordered with an evil grin.

Fearing the consequences of fighting back, Marth obeyed the bullies' order and allowed them to take him to a secluded, silent junkyard. It was one of the worst places he had been to. The lonely area was a mutated, enlarged garbage can. The car wreckages were aluminum cans. Scraps of paper were heaps of filthy bags filled with waste. Hunks of wood resembled toothpicks and Popsicle sticks.

Once when they arrived at the middle of the landfill, the loneliest part of the area, Waluigi roughly pushed Marth onto the dirt ground. Marth felt several bruises and aches bloating throughout his body. His navy school uniform was smeared with mud, which faded its colors. Whimpering inaudibly in fear, Marth glanced around his deserted, creepy surroundings. He happened to notice that the sky was becoming dark with sullen, gray clouds.

"W-Why did you bring me here?" Marth asked the two bullies as he unsteadily got up.

"To fight." Wario answered with a cruel grin. "Didn't you-a say that you want-a fight?"

"I never said that." Marth answered nervously.

"Too late-a!" Waluigi spoke with a chortle. "Don't you even try-a to call-a for help here! This place-a is empty! No one will-a hear you!"

"Do you want-a to face-a both of us?" Wario questioned, preparing to beat the victim into a pulp.

Marth gasped in horror. No, he did not want to fight! Like acting, fighting was not one of his specialties.

"N...No! No!" Marth screamed as he turned and tried to run away. He clumsily yet panicky scrambled over the heaps of garbage. "Leave me alone!"

"Shit! Get him!" Wario hastily spoke to his partner as they began to chase the bluenette.

Marth toppled over the foothill of junk with a scream. Hurriedly getting back onto his feet, he continued to climb over the mountains of smelly litter for his life. Getting chased by the bullies was like an appalling nightmare. Although he wanted to run faster, his exhausted legs were slowly giving up, prohibiting his mad dash.

Gasping urgently for air, Marth looked back as he exhaustedly pushed himself to climb over the hood a wrecked, damaged automobile. He saw Waluigi hurrying towards him, speedily getting closer.

"No... I need to...!"

Marth tried to hoist himself over the car but, he lacked the strength to do so, allowing Waluigi to catch up to him. The thin tormentor grabbed him by the ankle and violently pulled him down. Marth helplessly slid off the car's hood like a bar of soap and fell onto the ground with a loud thud.

"Let me go! Let me go!" Marth shrieked as he struggled to get free.

Waluigi's grip tightened on Marth's ankle, making him snivel weakly in pain. "Wario! I got-a him! I got-a him!"

Wario appearing at the scene made Marth's panic transform into hysterics. His hearting pounding on his chest, he panicky looked around his surroundings for anything to defend himself. He did not care how dirty, childish, or damaged it looked. He just wanted to flee from the bullies!

"I don't want to get beaten up!" Marth thought alarmingly to himself as he looked to his right. His dilated, petrified cerulean orbs caught a handle of the baseball bat sticking out of the rubble. Juddering uncontrollably, Marth swiftly grabbed the bat and tried to pull it out of the debris. Much to his relief, the defensive object came out easily.

"What should we-a do to him?" Wario asked as he approached his crony.

Waluigi turned to look at Marth. "I think-a we should—WWWAAAAGGGH!"

Waluigi's face was met with the swung, steel-hard baseball bat. With a booming clang!, he tumbled onto the trash-covered ground, sobbing babyishly in pain. After when he was struck in the face, he released Marth's ankle, allowing him to stand him. Completely in hysterics, Marth struck Waluigi with the bat again, hammering him in the neck. There was a loud CRACK!, which sounded like a small firecracker going off. Blood sprayed out of Waluigi's mouth onto Marth's vest.

With large, hypnotized, dazed eyes, Marth turned to Wario, who could only helplessly stand and watch the scene.

"No, stay away from-a me!" Wario screamed as he quickly backed away, only to slip on a banana peel.

A high-pitched, crazed, frantic screech of wrath was following by the violent sound of pounding on flesh, small yet agonizing cracks, and screams of torture. Despite Wario's wheezing, inaudible pleas, Marth continued to smash the infamous, hatred bully's body into a bloody mush. Yes, he knew that fighting was bad. However, this was for survival! If he stopped, Wario and Waluigi might recover and fight back!

SPLAT!

"When people are weak..."

CRACK!

"...they need someone who is weaker than them,"

"WWWAAAUGH!"

"so they can feel better..."

CLUNK!

"...about their sorry, pathetic selves!"

Marth angrily took deep breaths before continuing his bloodshed.

"When people look down at others..."

"...Urk...!"

"...they feel greater than they actually are."

"HHAAAAAUGGH!" Marth shrieked inhumanly like a monster as he uncontrollably panted for air. He looked at Wario's crushed, pulped, blood-spattered body. Despite the gory sight, Wario was barely alive.

"...Stop it... Marth...ah..." he feebly uttered.

Marth misheard Wario's frail, begging statement. Fueled by a boiling grudge and renewed rage, Marth rose the baseball bat over his head, preparing for the final blow.

"MY NAME IS MARTH!" he screamed in fury as he pugnaciously brought the bat down onto its intended target.

The sound of a ferocious crack echoed throughout the junkyard. Panting loudly, Marth dropped the bat onto Wario's body, which landed with a splat.

A splat?

Coming to realization, Marth distressingly glanced around his gruesome surroundings. Cardinal blood was splattered on the ground, bodies, trash, and on Marth himself.

"What did I do...?" Marth thought panicky to himself. "Did I just kill them? No, this got to be a joke! They are playing dead! They are waiting for me to turn my back so they could attack me!"

His hands shaking nervously, Marth picked up the bat again and poked Wario's body.

No response.

Marth slammed the bat on Wario's stomach.

No response.

"This can't be happening!" Marth looked behind and noticed Waluigi. Unlike his buddy's, his body was not completely doused in his own blood. He was awfully still... Was he playing dead? He was still for a while...

Marth moved Waluigi's head with the baseball bat. It was as limp as a rag doll.

Marth dropped the bat again in shock. They were not moving... That could mean only one thing...

"I killed them."

Overwhelmed by madness and horror, Marth panicky hurried out of the crime scene with a short, terrified cry. Even though the landfill was desolate and almost abandoned, he did not want to get caught with blood on his hands.

Author's Notes: Happy late Thanksgiving!

OT: Sorry for the late update! I got carried away with Thanksgiving break and school! Here's a nice, long chapter to make it up for it!

For those who saw my warning and avoided the violent part of this chapter, I'm going to summarize it quickly. Wario and Waluigi bring Marth to the junk and try to beat him up. In the end, Marth arms himself with the bat and manages to beat the two to death. That's right folks, Marth beat them to death.

I personally think the violence isn't as detailed enough for this fanfic to be rated M. So, I'm not going to change the rating.

Story Questions:

What did you have for Thanksgiving? My family decided to have salmon with some steamed vegetables and spaghetti.

Do you think Marth's family truly loves him? Why or why not?

Do you think Marth is justified for his murder? Why or why not?

What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter?

Chapter 24: Chapter 24

As the merciless rain poured onto the streets and thunder rumbled through the sky, Marth hurriedly opened the tall, iron gates, and rushed towards the porch, which provided safety from the heartless, cold weather. However, it failed to protect the little boy from his inner horrors.

Quietly opening the door, Marth silently peered around the living room before entering his house. He barely managed to cover the bloodstain on the front of his uniform by holding one of his textbooks in front of his chest. Though, he knew that effort would not last long. Sooner or later, he needed to put the textbook down!

Marth was afraid that his family might get suspicious when they saw him carry the book around. One of them, mainly his father, would eventually order his son to drop the book either with harsh, strict words or brutal force. Either way, the gloves that concealed his hands would be quickly pulled off, revealing the gore and horror he was trying to hide. Marth Lowell knew he broke the ultimate rule in his house. His family wold never let him off if they found out he committed a murder. The punishment would be more than a timeout in his room that lasted for hours.

Strangely, the house was awfully silent. His knees trembling in anxiety, Marth slowly stepped in and warily glanced around. This was a bit suspicious. His family must be hiding somewhere, waiting to surprise him! Did they happen to know that he committed two murders? Were they going to lunge from their hiding place and confront him?

Marth suddenly remembered a few important things. Elice got out of school later than him, and his parents were busily working on the final piece of their movie; they would not be back until late at night. In other words, Marth had a few spared moments to cover p his bloody tracks.

The first thing Marth did was hurry to the washing machine room. There, he stripped to his underwear and piled the soiled, soaked uniform into the washing machine. His family's other clothes were piled over the uniform, concealing it. It was a good thing that his mother was doing the laundry today. Her work would unintentionally yet erase the evidence. Jutting his head out of the room, Marth looked around for any signs of his sister before editing the room and hurrying up the stairs.

Once when he arrived in his room, Marth out on a fresh, clean T-shirt and a pair of sweatpants. Just as when he slipped into the pants, the sound of a door opening shot into the house, making him jump in jolt. The voice of a teenage girl talking cheerfully on a phone gave away the visitor.

Slowly sliding down against the wall, Marth sighed loudly in relief. Great, he was not discovered! Now, all he needed to do was wait! As time passed by, he would eventually forget the fact that he slaughtered Wario and Waluigi with his bare hands and continue his life! Nobody would discover his secret!

"That's not true."

Marth's brief relief abruptly ended and mutated into paranoia.

"Somebody must have spotted you running out of that junkyard. When the bodies are discover, the witness will tell the police who did it."

"B-But, I did not see anyone when I left the junkyard!" Marth mentally protested.

"Are you sure? Did you check everywhere?"

"Well, I think so..." Marth gazed at the ceiling. What if someone was watching him commit the crime? Whoever it was, he or she was definitely going to report to the police!

"Might as well act nice to the others so they won't suspect anything!"

"But, I'm not a good actor! Eventually, someone is going to learn out that I'm just pretending to be innocent!" Marth remembered his recent lessons with CIA, which always exposed his Achilles' heel despite his attempts to cover it.

"You'll eventually get used to it." Marth heard Elice coming up the stairs. *"Why don't you begin now? Your sister is coming!"*

Marth took the voice's advice like a student following a teacher's lecture. Slowly opening the door to a crack, his shy, nervous, cerulean eyes spotted Elice standing in the middle of the hallway, browsing through her messages on her phone. It was a perfect chance for Marth to talk to her, as there was no stupid, worthless boyfriends willing to interrupt their conversation like an abrupt rainstorm on a picnic.

The little bluenette hesitated before greeting his sister. Of course, his acting skills were absolutely terrible. They were as tasteless and bland as tonics. Famous, great actors always create a mask successfully that suited their situations. Marth on the other hand, always got stuck on making the shape of the mask. Most of them had holes and tears on their repulsive colors and patterns, making the audience look through him easily and discover his true feelings.

However, Marth always missed the train. He needed to begin somewhere! If he gave up on creating the perfect mask, he would never achieve his goal! There was Elice, still on her phone! The train was still stationed there, waiting for its eager passengers! If Marth did not board the coach now, he needed to wait for a long time for the next one!

Just as when Elice was about to enter her room, Marth quickly pushed the door open and clumsily stumbled towards his older sibling. "H-Hello, E-Elice— Ahh!" he exclaimed as he ungracefully tripped over his own legs and tumbled onto the ground. At that embarrassing moment, Marth thought that he dropped and ruined his mask, which was freshly painted and waiting to dry.

"Oh, Marth!" Elice gasped worriedly as she hurried to Marth's side. "Are you ok?"

Marth's face turned into a warm shade of red as Elice helped him up. Was it working...? "...I'm ok!" he said, forcing a cheery smile, hoping that it did not seem disfigured and phony.

Elice smiled back at her little brother. "You seem to be happier. Did something happen?"

An image of Wario's and Waluigi's decomposing, bloody corpses lying in the middle of the junkyard flashed through Marth's eyes. "I think it was something I ate!" he chuckled at the disgusting, horrifying vision, trying to ease his thoughts. Those pathetic losers did not deserve to live.

"Did Mother make your favorite lunch?"

Marth remembered today's lunch, which came from the school cafeteria. Unlike Liza's cooking, which was nearly flawless, fresh, and mouthwatering, the foods from the cafeteria were disgusting, stomach-twisting trash that were made of processed, cheap ingredients. "Not really. She packed me a small snack, though." Marth lied, his voice still sounding happy.

"Did you get wet in the rain?" Elice asked, noticing that Marth was not dressed in his uniform.

"Don't think about the blood." Marth urged himself as he smiled softly and answered, "Yeah, I did. I knew that it was going to rain, but not this hard!"

"Do you want me to dry your head? Your hair is still wet." Elice pointed out. "I'll get a towel from the laundry room."

"No, it's fine!" Marth immediately and bluntly answered.

Elice gave Marth a gentle pat on the head before turning. "If you say so! I'll talk to you later, Marth!"

Marth watched Elice go into her room, before returning to his. Once when the older bluenette was gone, Marth's beaming smile fell into a depressed, disappointed frown. His body was frozen into a position; he was about to hug Elice. A powerful muscle on the left side of his chest known as the heart slowly shrunk back into its wimpy, hurt position.

When was the last time Elice hugged him? Probably a year ago, before she met her boyfriend and forgot all about him. Although hugs seemed to be meaningless to some, Elice's embraces were as valuable as diamonds to Marth. They were warm, loving healing spells that could make any gloomy day better.

"Well, at least I managed to speak to Elice..." Marth thought to himself as he sighed sadly to himself.

As Elice set her book bag onto the floor and took her thick textbooks and binder out, she thought to herself, *"Marth is happy all of a sudden. Is he up to something?"*

It was nine o' clock when Marth's parents finally arrived back home. The two were exhausted, yet one was satisfied yet intimidated while the other was furious. They had finally completed their movie project. Although this threw a boatload of stress off their shoulders, they came to another problem. Which movie should they audition for next?

When Marth heard his mother locking the door, he did not mind it one bit. He only knew that his parents were back. With a drowsy yawn, he continued to finish an essay for his English class. He dimly rubbed the sleep out of his eyes, knowing that it was unwise to suddenly fall asleep in the middle of an important assignment.

Just as when Marth began to write the final paragraph on his essay, he heard his father's thumping, shaking, intimidating footsteps slowly thundering up the steps. The bluenette paused for a few seconds and bit his lips. Marth managed to sense his father's current mood. After years of living in a household with him, he knew that Cornelius Lowell was terribly upset and angry.

"Please don't go into my room..." Marth mentally begged when he heard Cornelius in the hallway. His heart sank when he heard the intimidating footsteps enter his room. Marth immediately peered down onto his essay, took his pencil, and tried to write a sentence. Maybe his father was just here to check to see if his pressured son was still working! The footsteps suddenly halted and a chilling, still silence filled the air. Marth tried to keep his attention on the assignment sitting in front him as the unsettling, dominating presence of his father washed over him.

The terrifying presence steadily vanished as Cornelius left Marth's room. For a few moments, Marth managed to breathe a bit easier. Whew, that was close...! He thought that his father was going to blow a fuse over something unreasonable and tiny. After a minute however, Marth felt another presence enter his room. Marth still managed to respire comfortably however, as the aura was neither horrifying nor warm but neutral.

"Marth, may I interrupt you for a few moments?" Liza asked.

"Yes, what is it?" Marth responded, looking up at his mother.

"We just learned that two boys of your age were murdered." Liza sternly spoke.

Marth kept a stiff, nonchalant expression. Do not break down... Do not confess... "Where were they found?" he asked.

"When they were reported as missing persons, the police found their beaten bodies in the junkyard." Liza answered. "They are currently looking into this case, and the murderer hasn't been caught."

Marth swallowed nervously and allowed his mother to continue.

"Marth, when you walk home from school, be careful of your surroundings." Liza concluded before she began to exit Marth's room.

Just as when Liza was about to step out of the doorway, Marth suddenly asked, "Mother, why are you telling me this?"

Liza just paused.

"Is it because you truly love me?" Marth asked again, his voice slightly shaking.

"Why do you ask such a thing?" Liza only replied. "I do love you."

"But, why?" Marth's voice was rising in impatience and disbelief. "Do you love me as a son?"

"I do not know why." Was Liza's final sentence before she quickly left. She did not to be in the conversation.

Marth's hands slowly rolled into tight fists as he watched his mother leave. When she was gone, he unsteadily opened his hands and looked at his palms. Did his own parents love him? Or did they only see him as a pawn produced to carry the Lowell's name down the aisles of each generation?

Digging through the layers of his memory, Marth tried to recall even the tiniest moments when his parents expressed affection and love to him. Through, no matter where he went and how deep he dug, he always traced the source of kindness to his older sister Elice.

So far, Elice was the only member of his family who expressed her care and concern to him. With the addition of an invasive parasite known as a boyfriend however, Marth felt her warmth slowly fading away. The boyfriend was leeching on her sensitivity, leaving little of the virtue to Marth.

His father and mother did not see him as their son, but as a name bearer. His sister Elice was the only one who viewed him as someone who was a piece of the Lowell puzzle, yet her attention from her was drifting away on a lonely raft beyond his reach. Marth was so frustrated and buried in his sea of anguish, he did not realize the hot tears dripping down his face.

With eyes narrowing in confusion, Marth read the lab instructions handed out in his science class. It was nearly like a familiar yet ancient cryptograph to him; it was clearly typed in English using the twenty six letters of the alphabet, yet it was difficult for him to understand.

Marth looked at his lab mates Daisy, Porky, Lucina, and Ingio. Being the social butterfly she was, Lucina was the center of attention, talking to her cronies about... Maybe other people? She was talking about what she was going to do over the weekend a few seconds ago. Clutching the lab paper in internal, steaming rage, Marth silently continued to examine the instructions, which were still as blurry as fog. What was the point of teamwork? Was it working together, or gossiping with your closest friends while letting one person do all of the work?!

After a few minutes, Marth finally began to decode the message. Through, it was a bit difficult to concentrate when one of the loudest, biggest mouths in the class was blathering obnoxiously.

"And I said to Severa that the reason she is not going to be invited to my party is, she isn't good enough for me!" Daisy concluded. "She needs to prove herself I order to join my circle!"

"Don't let her in." Lucina responded. "Did you see what she did in drama today?"

"Yeah, I did!" Daisy replied. "She...!"

"Excuse her for not being as perfect as you guys." Marth grumbly thought to himself. *"Help me with this lab!"*

Finished with reading the instructions, Marth went to the table in front of his classroom to get a bottle of lemon juice, a box of matches, a bottle of ink, and a small, blank piece of paper. Trying to ignore his gossiping group, he tried to follow the lab's instructions. Was he supposed to write the message, sprinkle it with juice, and light the paper on fire? Is that what the instructions said?

Wait, he was supposed to sprinkle the paper with juice, write the message, and then gently light the paper. The first steps were easy. Marth carefully watered the tin piece of paper with the acidic juice and wrote a small message with the ink. He waited for a few moments before lighting a small match. Marth's hands unevenly shook as he cautiously guided the tiny flame towards the bottom of the paper. He should see the message...

However, Marth was not careful enough. A tiny, seemingly harmless wave of bright, orange fire washed over the pure, white paper and abruptly ignited it in a violent burst of flames. With a panicked cry, Marth accidentally dropped the paper on the table. A few classmates who were near jumped and screamed in panic.

Completely shocked, Marth could barely tell the difference between his exaggerated imagination and primitive reality. If a mature, calm adult were the see the blaze, they would have seen it as a small, ignited fire that could easily be dosed with a simple cup of water. Not to Marth, though. His unripe perspective got the best of him, making see a devastating blaze that was about to engulf the classroom. Utterly panicked, Marth grab the bottle of lemon juice and poured every last drop of its contents onto the desk. It did successfully drench the flame, however some of the life-saving liquid got on his fellow classmates. The girls shrieked as their favorite outfit was strained with the juice while the boys exclaimed, "Whoa!"

"What's going on back there?" the teacher asked, looking up from her computer.

Marth looked down at his feet in shame as eyes turned to look at him.

"Beeeeeeep!" the electronic school bell blared as students hurried out of their final class of the day, ready to enjoy the weekend.

Through the large stampede of students was Marth. Yet, he was not rushing towards the exit of the school. Rather, he was slowly walking deeper into the hallways towards the janitor's room. Due to the majority of his peers heading the opposite direction, Marth had to evade them like a spaceship dodging asteroids. Yet like any human being, Marth was not perfect.

"Hey! Watch where you're going, fool!" One of the upperclassmen shouted at Marth when he accidentally bumped into him. The rude remark was followed by his cronies jeering mockingly at him as they swayed away.

"Why is everyone at this blasted school like this?" Marth miserably asked himself as he glared sadly at the clique. He looked around for a few moments. *"Now, where is the janitor's room? Oh, it's right there!"*

Pushing his way through the crowds, Marth arrived in front of the janitor's room, a room that was as big as a closet that served as storage for cleaning supplies. With a tired sigh, Marth slowly and cautiously opened it, so he would not swing the door into a passerby's face. He then stepped into the narrow, tiny, dark room and looked for the desired supplies.

"Where's the mop?" Marth thought to himself in annoyance. *"Ugh, the janitor must be using it now. Might as well use soap and sponges. When something happens, it's always job to clean everything up..."*

Marth dreaded any school activities that required groups. He was always the butt of the group; people always sat on him comfortably while he did all of the work. When he failed to achieve their expectations, he would get whooped harshly. Yet, it was not his fault that his lab group in Science got a C+ on their project! If they did a little bit of the work and not pile them on his back, they would have gotten a higher grade.

Authority was something Marth wished to have. If he had this source of power in his own hands, his expedition trips would go his way. However, there was always someone who was naturally above him.

While Marth was searching for the cleaning substances, he did not notice three infamous bullies stealthily sneaking up behind him.

"So, what should we do to him?" Mido asked Gangrel, the leader of the mad trio. "Trip him or something?"

"No. I have a better idea." Gangrel grinned darkly at his own plan. "We need a chair. Do you guys know where get one?"

"Hold on." Wolf quickly spoke up. The gray anthropomorphic wolf hurried into a nearby open classroom, where he got a simple chair.

"Give me it." Gangrel said as he snatched the chair out of Wolf's hands. Without warning Marth, he slammed the door shut and quickly set the chair below the doorknob, temporary locking the door.

"Wha—!" Marth cried out when the source of light suddenly turned off. "What's happening?!"

Stumbling frightfully through the darkness, Marth felt for the doorknob and tried to pull the door open to no avail. "Let me out!" he exclaimed fearfully. He heard Gangrel and his cronies snickering mischievously as they hurried away. "Please! Let me out..."

With a high-pitched snivel, Marth collapsed onto his kneels, hugging himself tightly. He did not even try to hold in his tears. The darkness only had the color black, which did little to comfort a person. The miniature, human-produced rain rolled down his red face as he began to weep wildly to himself.

"I can't take this anymore!" Marth shakily whimpered to himself, sniffing loudly. "There isn't a place for me to be!"

No social acceptance, no family acceptance, nothing in this world accepted the way Marth was. It was already engraved in stone when he was born. He was fated to face rejection throughout his life.

"Don't cry." With a tiny, surprised noise, Marth's head glanced around for the source of the voice. The voice was deep like an adult male's and reassuring, low, and sinister.

"Who's t-t-there?" Marth nervously asked. "Come out!"

"You can't see me... I am you." The voice answered coolly.

"How?!" Marth was starting to freak out.

The voice ignored Marth's previous question. *"This place isn't for you, is it?"*

"Yeah..." Marth sighed somberly and held back his tears. "No matter what I do and how hard I try, I won't get rejected! People always harass and look down at me!"

"Then, listen to my commands." The voice offered. *"Transform this pathetic, harsh world into a perfect haven for you."* A white gloved hand ghostly appeared in front of Marth, reaching for his hand. *"Do you want to live a toy's life; pushed, pulled, twisted, and thrown until you break? Or do you want to follow my lead and turn against your harsh reality? You deserve to live, unlike those other weak, ignorant beings. Getting rid of them is a step closer to your utopian dreams. You have done it before."*

"But, how can I do it?" Marth cautiously asked, slowly being convinced.

"Put on a mask." the voice answered. *"With a mask, you are a different person. Don't you want to be another person?"*

"Yes, I do." Marth softly confirmed. "Thank you... I really needed someone like you!"

With no regrets, Marth took the gloved hand, who helped him up to his feet.

In the empty, dead silent hallway, the door to the janitor's room slowly creaked open. A little, azure-haired boy known as Marth exited the room, not caring how he managed to get out,

However, the boy was not Marth anymore. His natural mask known as a physical appearance only told so much about him. Gazing lividly at the wall with his narrowed, lifeless eyes, he slowly and mentally creating a new mask; a new identify he could hide behind.

"I'll kill everyone who got in my damn way. All of you!"

Author's Notes: Oh snap, it's happening!

OT: Sorry for the late update! Recently, I had finals so I needed to concentrate on the tests. It's technically all over now, so I'm currently on winter break! Since I have loads of free time, I'm going to try to finish as many chapters as I can. Also, I'm beginning my ABoF fancomic. None of the pages have been uploaded on my dA account (See my profile for the link.), but I'm about to upload the title once when I finish typing the story questions and etc.

Story Questions:

What was the test science experiment/lab activity you did in school? I can't really decide!

What was the ghostly, gloved hand Marth talked to?

Your usual, "What's going to happen in the next chapter?" question.

Disclaimer: SSB does not belong to me! If it did, then Lucina would have a different moveset than Marth's!

Chapter 25: Chapter 25

Children found weekends as a moment of getaway that lasted for two precious days. Unless if something came up, they would use that time to do whatever they wanted. It was common for boys to gather their friends and run to the local park to mess around. Once when they were bored again, they would either run to a nearby hobby, toy, or game store to explore entertaining gadgets and figurines. As soon as it was afternoon, the little boys hurry back to their families for dinner. Though, for the the larger, more mature, teenagers, they might go to a fast food restaurant for some grub.

Yet, making a list of people to kill was an unlikely thing for a boy close to Marth's age to do.

The door to Marth's room was locked from the inside. Although this made some loving parents suspect something was wrong with their child, Marth's parents assumed that their second-born, little son was studying and did not want interruptions. They were half correct. Marth did not want interruptions, through for different reasons.

Furiously scribbling down names in a tiny, unobtrusive notebook, Marth's dull, empty eyes vaguely read his victim's names. It had been a day since he fell for the dark yet sympathetic voice. Although his conscious warned him that this was immoral, Marth brushed the angelic voice away. After countless years of enduring his torments and loneliness, he finally broke down. There was no other way to escape from who he was. Marth was trapped in his jail cell. It would not help if he managed to break out. If he managed to escape, where could he hide as a fugitive? Marth had no place to return to. The only solution to his misery was to take the cruel, unjust world into his hands and alter it.

Although he was submerged in his own boiling lava, Marth still referred to his common sense. What if he got caught? If a pair of eyes managed to catch him in his devious act, he was through! His life would be ruined forever. His parents would not be the only one disappointed in him; all of society would look down at him!

Still, people mostly saw him as an eleven-year-old, azure-haired, cerulean-eyed, innocent boy who went to middle school. What if he committed his devious deeds under a new alias?

Marth silently finished writing his list. As he browsed through the list for any mistakes, he slightly smiled and softly closed the notebook. He had no regrets in his decision. This was it. This was the moment when his life was finally going to change. All he needed was a mask to shrink behind.

Listening for any signs of his parents, Marth went into his closet and rummaged through his belongings. He managed to find a dark blue overcoat along with a matching scarf. His mother brought it a few months ago for his birthday. After learning that it was a bit too large for him, she put it into his closet. While the large coat waited for the moment it could be useful, Liza's memory of it drifted into oblivion. Since his own parents probably never seen Marth in the overcoat, it was perfect for his disguise.

But, an overcoat could not prevent bystanders from looking at his face, the most recognizable trademark Marth adorned. He needed something to cover it. As he dug deeper into the heaps of his closet, he managed to find a lonely yet large box. Wondering what was its contents, Marth took it out and opened it.

Inside, was a plastic tiara, a large, decorative knife unsheathed in a small sheath, and a blue mask. The blue mask was the first object that caught Marth's attention. It was a midnight-blue butterfly with gold trimmings. A pair of eyeholes allowed its wearer to watch where he was going. Marth frowned at the concealing accessory. He remembered that Cia gave him the mask months ago so he could practice on toning his voice. Of course, it ended up being a disappointment. Even behind a mask, Marth still could not force himself to act.

Marth had to take a few moments to recognize the fake tiara. It was gold and adorned with fake rhinestones. The color that caught his attention was the faux aquamarine, as it was his favorite color. A thunderbolt of nostalgia struck him as he recognized the childish accessory. The tiara originally belonged to Elice. Years ago, when the two were still in elementary school, Elice would force him to play dress-up with her. Much to his annoyance, she always put the tiara atop his head. Finally, Marth got tired of Elice's impish antics. He somehow managed to steal the tiara and hide it in his closet. Sadly, this did not stop Elice from asking him to play with her, but at least he did not need to wear the stupid tiara. Marth smiled for the first time in days. He remembered the time when everything was carefree and blissful.

Marth decided to include both the mask and the tiara in his disguise. While the mask served a practical purpose; concealing his true identity, the tiara served as a charm for good luck. Since it reminded him of the happy days he once enjoyed, Marth found it as a motivation to achieve his dream of creating his own world.

The knife finally got its deserved attention. When he first saw it, Marth was perplexed. How did he get this weapon? Didn't his father forbid weapons in his procession? Was it a gift? How he obtained the dagger was not part of his interest, however. Marth was glad that he got easy access to a lethal weapon.

Now that he got all of his needed equipment, Marth sneakily hid it in his closet. He buried it in the back of his closet, the messiest part of his personal storage. No one would bother to look in the place. Besides, no one would not suspect anything!

Ten o' clock. It was a time for people to sleep or get ready to go to sleep. Throughout the city, the apartments' and homes' windows either shone a warm, lively orange or a murky, silent blue. For the people of Smashburg, it the end of the day, and they needed to rest to prepare for the next.

For Marth however, his day had not ended. It was still beginning.

Covering one of his pillows with his blanket, Marth knew that his family was not going to suspect him sneaking out late in night. They were going to assume that he was asleep like the good boy he was supposed to be. Although he knew that his father might check on him in the middle of the night, Marth did not have to worry. Cornelius did not have the willingness to look for details. If he saw even a tiny lump in his head, he would assume that Marth was sleeping and leave.

Now that he was ready, Marth silently opened one of his bedroom windows, which was blocked by an old oak tree. He got a long piece of rope and tied it to one of the tree's strong branches, before carefully stepping out of the window and climbing down the tree. Using the rope, Marth scaled down the tree and successfully made it down to the front yard without waking anyone.

Marth felt the knife in his coat's large coat and smirked, his lips forming a twisted, cruel grin. Finally, after years of his enemies giving him torment when he cried for help, they were finally getting what they deserved all along.

Their senses deteriorating due to the influence of alcohol, Gangrel, Mido, and Wolf ungracefully staggered down the dark streets, trying to find their way home. The only thing that illuminated their shady surroundings were the old, worn street lamps that desperately needed new light bulbs. The orange shade of light flickered as the three teens trudged dizzily, trying not to stumble onto the ground.

"Doooo you guysh k-k-knows where are w-weee?" Gangrel slurred as he dimly looked around his unfamiliar surroundings. "Our parentsssh will definitely get p-pissed off at usssh..."

"I have noooo clue...!" Wolf laughed, completely unaware of the dangerous situation he and his friends were in.

Hiding in an allyway, Marth nervously watched the unaware bullies slowly totter closer to their awaited demise. He unsheathed the knife with his shaky fingers, feeling that adredliene rush through his veins. Could he actually do this? What if the knife did not work? What if the bullies fought back? Well, it should not be a huge problem, as it was clear that they were drunk.

"Ooh man, I can'tsh feel my shoulder..." Mido sluggishly garbled.

"You won't feel anything in a few moments..." Marth sneered as he cautiously emerged from his hiding spot and crept towards his targets.

Wolf heard Marth's soft yet malicious words. "Did yeah guysssssh hear ssshomething?" he asked groggily.

"We're drunk, shooo yeah..." Gangrel responded. "You must beee heeearing thingsss..."

"R-Really?" Wolf turned around, only to be met by a fatal, brutal knife in the throat. "U-Urk!" he bearly managed to choke out, collapsing onto the ground as blood sprayed out of his mouth.

"What'sshh going onn?" Mido questioned, turning around and meeting the same fate. The very same knife speared him several times in the neck and chest as he shrieked in pain.

"Eh? Are ya guyssh ok back there?" Gangrel asked drowsily, just before Marth impaled him in the back with the razor-sharp knife. "Urgh...! Urk..."

Slice. Slash. Rip. Marth stabbed Gangrel in the chest and shoulder before "mercifully" finishing off with a slash of this throat. Now a lifeless, bloody corpse, Gangrel soundlessly tumbled onto the bloodstrained ground with his wretched cronies. A loud, unnerving splat spattered down the remote, murky streets. With a twisted grin, Marth eyed his weapon before looking at his recent, departed victems on the sidewalk, which was now a dark red. His newly-found weapon did work!

Looking around his shady surroundings for any bystanders, Marth was about to run away from the shocking crime scene when something struck him. He recognized the old, torn apartment building across the street. Whenever his parents and Elice had to go somewhere, he was taken to the apartment and left alone with *her*.

Maybe he could kill two birds with one stone. Feeling the aderaline bubbling excitedly in his veins, Marth raced across the street and silently entered the apartment complex. He impatiently hoped that *she* was in there. It would be a waste of time if he could not give the beloved, well-earned gift to her!

"Am I going to watch it? Oh, hell no!" Cia scoffed, clutching her phone tightly in bitterness. She leaned back on her sofa. "I know that famous actors like Cornelius Lowell and his wife are in it, but I'm still not going to watch it! My stupid twin sister is in it!"

Cia's answer was followed by angry, garbled words. "Oh, you're saying that I'm jealous and I should let it go? Well, I'm telling you that I'm just as good as Lana." Cia huffed in jealousy. "It's just that, everyone likes her more than me! She doesn't try hard in auditions to get in a movie, and always gets the part she wants! I on the other hand, practice every day before the audition and what do I get? A smaller part or rejection! It's ridicious! While Lana lives her life on fame, I have to tutor bratty children to make a living!"

A small knock on the door was what interrupted Cia's fuming rumbling. With an enraged groan, Cia said angrily, "Oh, some idiot knocked on my door. I'll talk to you later."

Slamming her phone on a nearby table, Cia thundered towards the door and furiously opened it. She was ready to slapping the smirk off her visitor. "What do you want?!"

Mysteriously, there was no one on the other side of the door. Sighing in aggravation, Cia slammed the door shut. It must have been those teenagers that lived down the hallway pulling their usual pranks on her.

Just as when Cia was about to sit back down in her comfortable sofa, there was another knock. This time, it was louder and much harder.

"The fuck?" Cia mumbled crossly to herself as she furiously opened the door again. "Who's out there?"

Again, there was no one in the hallway. Her boiling blood pressure rising with her anger, Cia slowly looked around before shutting the door.

"Whoever is doing this does not have a life..." Cia growled as she turned.

"KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!" The irritating sound finally snapped Cia in half.

"WHO THE HELL IS IT?!" Cia yelled wrathfully as she banged open the door.

Although she saw no one, Cia decided to roam around the hallway, looking for her tormentor. With a flashlight lighting her shadowy way, she explored the hall. For every corner she turned, she expected to see the glimpse of a impish teenager or child hurrying to get away. Strangely, no matter how long and how fast she stormed down the hallway, Cia failed to find her aggressor.

Giving up, Cia fumed back into her room. "I swear, tomorrow I will have a chat with Bowser." she grumbled, locking her door. "I'll tell him that if his children bother me one more time," she turned to go back to her seat. "I'll rip their eyes off and —EEEEEKKK!"

Sitting on her favorite sofa was an eerie little boy with a mask covering his face. The fact that he suddenly appeared in Cia's apartment room was not the reason why Cia became deathly terrified of her. If anyone besides Cia's closet friends were discovered in her home, she would kick them out in a blink of an eye. The thing that disturbed and horrified Cia the most was the fresh, cardinal blood that strained the boy's clothing, the small yet gleaming knife in his dominant, right hand, and her shattered, broken phone sitting on the ground.

Cia slowly backed away as the little murderer got off her seat and slowly came forward to her. "W-Who are you, and what do you want from me."

"Do you not recognize me?" her unexpected, alarming guest asked in a dark tone, pointing his weapon at her.

Cia failed to recognize the boy's soft yet chilling voice. "N-No..."

"Then I must be a good actor." Marth laughed as he took his mask off, tossing it away. His soulless, dull eyes gazed mercilessly at his prey.

"Marth?! Why are you here?" Cia exclaimed. She gasped when her back finally hit the wall.

"Simple. I've giving you a thank you gift." Marth answered as he raised his knife at his private tutor. "Thank you for teaching me how to act."

Cia was about to respond, only to get speared in the stomach twice with Marth's lethal weapon. As agony tore through her stomach and ripped her senses in half, she shrieked in pain as a certain, red liquid soaked through her clothes. It slowly flowed onto the flat floor, creating a puddle. Marth sadistically chuckled at the woman's pain. If it were not for the atrocious, deadly situation she was in, Cia would have viewed her student's smile as innocent and childish. However, the pure, white blanket was strained with blood. Marth's smile was now seen as daunting, even malicious.

Marth's giggle died as his expression fell into a serious, worried look. "Oh, you cannot fight back and save your own, precious life? Where's your whip?" he asked, trying to look innocent.

Breathing heavily in pain and gnawing her teeth in fear, Cia could only watch Marth reach into his left pocket with wide, violet eyes. She gasped loudly to herself when he pulled out her whip. How did he manage to find that?

"Oh, it's right here~!" Marth teasingly answered, mocking his tutor's helplessness. He giggled unnervingly before his cheerful smile fell into a merciless glare. "Aren't you going to fight back? Aren't you going to scold me for breaking into your room and hit me with your whip, like this?"

Clutching her stomach, Cia could not respond. She was beginning to feel faint due to blood loss.

Marth lashed Cia's whip at its owner. "Come on, fight back!" he mocked callously as he slashed the whip at Cia's face again. "Didn't you practice? You always told me to practice! This tells me that you never practiced! Such a hypocrite!"

As Marth continued to belt her with the long, sharp whip, Cia helplessly shrieked, wishing that someone could hear her pleas for help. She did not want to die this way. She wanted to die peacefully, alone in a quiet surrounding. Her heart continued to pound panicky as she gradually became dizzy. Eventually, Cia could not withstand her pain, resulting in her untimely blackout.

Marth continued to hit his tutor for several minutes. It was a matter of time until he noticed that she was not moving anymore.

"Hmmm?" Marth hummed with a carefree smile as he gave Cia a nudge with the sharp point of his blade. "You're not moving..." He felt for a pulse, only to fail to find one.

"She bled to death...!" Marth thought to himself as he began to chuckle to himself. "Hehehehe..." The bluenette's chuckle eventually turned into hysterical laughter. "Hehehehahaha—AHAHAHAHAHAHA!" he screamed, as he through her head back and tears of conflicting, overexcited emotions merged from his wide, crazed eyes.

From that instant, time stopped for Marth. It marked the moment when his inner demon finally consumed him.

A roar of uncontrollable, wild laughter was what caused Marth to jolt out of his sleep. His eyes darting around, he clutched his light covers as he tried to calm down. Marth's cerulean eyes tried to look through the barred door. Although he could not see what was happening, Marth assumed that someone finally broke down, unable to handle being locked in this restrictive asylum.

Hugging himself, Marth looked out of the barred window as he began to weep quietly to himself. It was night, which marked the end of his carefree, joyful life and the beginning of his new life; locked in this tiny cage for eternity. Judging by the nature of his new home, Marth assumed that he could hardly be given any food and warmth. After countless days, months, or even years, he would eventually every human beings, Marth did not want to die like this. He wanted to depart the earth surrounded by his loved ones after saying goodbye.

A pulse of pain in Marth's head caused him to whimper. His attention turned to the erratic dream he had. What was it all about? Did it symbolize his desires to break loose from this twisted hell? Ironically enough, the little boy closely resembled him.

"If people start breaking down like that, it'll give them a perfect reason to keep them here." A voice cruelly remarked.

Marth quickly wiped his tears as two security guards approached his cell. Judging by their youthful appearance, he assumed that they were new to the job.

"I know, right?" his partner responded with a laugh. He took notice of Marth, who fearfully looked back at him. "What are

we supposed to do him now?"

"Take him to the showers." The first guard answered as he unlocked the cell and boldly approached Marth, who whimpered quietly in fear and cowered in the corner. "Aw, look! He's so scared! Masked Slasher my ass. I'm going to laugh so hard if he tries to escape this place naked."

"I know!" The guard's partner laughed at his friend's joke.

"Did he just call me that Masked Slasher?" Marth asked himself with wide eyes as the guard handcuffed him and violently pulled him off the bed. "Ahhh!" he exclaimed as a painful shock buzzed through his bones.

"Come with us, you got that?" the guard asked as he began to drag Marth out of his cell.

Marth hissed in pain and griped defenselessly. "Stop it!" he begged as he began to feel a stinging pain around his wrists. "You're hurting me!"

"Then come along with us!" the guard only impudently responded, giving the captive a swift kick in the ribs.

"AH!" Marth shouted as tears threatened to come. "I'm so scared! Please stop!"

"Get up!" the guard brashly ordered, shoving the poor blue-haired teen onto the ground.

"I want Woy!" Marth only sobbed dismally, curling into a defensive fetal position. "I want Woooy!"

The guard's partner sighed in frusteration. "Just drag him."

As icy water poured out of the shower head onto his body, Marth sat on the freezing, tiled ground, tightly hugging himself for warmth and comfort. The sound of water shattering on the ground was the only thing he could hear.

Although it had been only half a day in the facility, Marth desperately wanted to escape. He could not endure the fact that innocent people were held behind its bars, unable to see their loved ones. He did not want to wake up to the sound of people shrieking madly, slowly loosing their sanity. Through it sounded selfish, Marth did not want to end up like them.

But, how should he escape? Finding an escape route in his cell was futile. It would take too long. Besides, he would get discovered by one of the guards. Marth knew that the facility had strict, ongoing security. Eyes vigilantly watched every prisoner around the clock.

The only way to escape was when he was outside of his cell. Yet, Marth was still unsure. There were always guards watching him carefully whenever he was not confined. However, there might be a moment when he was left alone... What was it? It was at the tip of Marth's head.

Shower time. That was the only time Marth could think of.

Marth did not know how often the facility gave shower time. Judging by his instincts, it was not often. His hands touching the running water, Marth looked directly at the shower head. He knew that he needed to take advantage of this moment. If he wanted to escape this horrifying place, he needed to start now!

Without turning off the shower, Marth carefully pushed away the curtains and crept towards the entrance of the shower room. He saw the two guards talking uproariously, not paying full attention. As he quickly dressed in his florescent blue clothes, Marth carefully kept an eye on them. Since the two were not alert, Marth might have a chance to escape. However, Marth noticed the guns enclosed in a projective, leather case attached to their belt. Knowing his luck, he knew that the guards might hear him and threaten to shoot him. If he resisted, this could result in the end of his sorry life.

This left Marth with only one option, which was to attack the guards!

Without warning, Marth lunged at the guard with his backed turned to him. Once when he grabbed him, the guard began to struggle violently in his arms.

"He's trying to escape! Help!" he shouted.

The guard's partner pointed his pistol at him.

"Don't shoot!" The first guard exclaimed. "You're going to hit me—WOAH!"

Grunting in effort, Marth tossed the guard at the second guard, sending them flying across the hallway. As he watched

his opponents slide away from him like ice cubes on a flat surface, he noticed a key lying on the ground. Interested, Marth picked it up and looked at it, Hmmm, this might be useful.

"Get him!" The first guard shouted. His partner pointed the gun at Marth, who quickly scurried away, down the hallway. "Don't shoot him! Gharnef wants him alive!"

Marth's stomach began to nervously turn as he hurried down the hallway. "I know where to use this key!" he said to himself as he dashed towards the back door. "I know!"

Grabbing the door's handle, Marth used the key to unlock it and rushed into the cold, dark night with the two guards trailing him. "He's escaping! Get him!"

As he ran around the large, intimating building, Marth looked around for the bridge. He knew that he could not just jump into the water and try to swim to shore! It would be too exhausting for his weak body! Besides, Marth had doubts in his swimming ability. Much to his relief, Marth saw the unguarded bridge in the distance. He began to run faster towards the reviving, hopeful structure. It was a hand that could gently take him back home.

The only thing Marth heard was the sound of his own footsteps thumping panicky on the bridge's concrete ground. His azure hair whipping in his eyes, Marth turned around, looking for any signs of the guards. He did not see them, making Marth smile in relief.

Marth's reprieve only lasted for a few seconds though. The found of a horn blaring jolted Marth out of his fantasy, making him look ahead of him. The glaring, bright headlights of a truck made his heart flip-flop in panic. His face turning white, Marth realized that if its drivers saw him, they might catch him and bring him back to the facility! What should he do? Should he try to sneak around it?

As the truck quickly grew bigger, Marth's fight-or-flight survival instants urgently rolled a dice. The dice read, "Jump."

His heart beating hysterically and his head pumped with anxiety and desperation, Marth leapt off the bridge, into the violent, cold water.

Author's Notes: Cia, you thought your day was bad enough huh?

Happy whatever-doesn't-offend you! I guess you can consider this my gift to all of you guys. (It is kinda odd when you think about it.) So far, I still think that this story is rated T. I've read some horror fanfics with this rating before that had more character deaths and violence, so I think it's ok. I hope you guys have a great holiday!

I understand if you point out some spelling errors. For some reason, I didn't spell names like Marth, Eliwood, and Palutena correctly, so Microsoft Office decided to rage quit and stop checking for spelling errors in my long story.

In case you don't know, this chapter and probably the next few chapters will jump from Marth's past to the present. Don't be confused!

Story Questions:

Do you think Marth's victims deserved to die?

Again, your usually "What do you think it's going to happen next?" question. I need to be more creative.

How should Marth realize that he is the Masked Slasher himself?

Chapter 26: Chapter 26

Illuminating the darkness with his flashlight, Roy ran through the wharf as he looked for any signs of Marth's presence. Although the search party for the bluenet began hours ago, no one managed to find him. Yes, they already knew that Marth failed to arrive to work, so the pizza joint was off the list. Though it was late, Link and his family were still driving through the streets of Smashburg. Maybe Marth decided to run away! Yet, the lack of a text from Link told Roy that it was not the case. Ike along with his little sister Mist decided to check the hospital, thinking that Marth could have gotten into an accident. It was doubtful, though. Pit expanded the search party with his wings. By soaring though the air, he managed to find things that were blue. However, the only blue thing he did not see was Marth. Not the person who was willing to look after nightfall, Zelda just spread the news of the missing Marth to her neighbors, hoping that one of the, could give them a clue of what could have happened to him.

"Maaarth! Are you there?!" Roy called down a shadowy alleyway. He pointed his his flashlight down the dark, ominous alleyway. The beam of light only revealed some trash bags, trash cans, and some scurrying rats.

Roy turned to Eliwood, who was closely behind him. "Dad, do you see him?"

Eliwood sadly his head. "No, I don't." The older redhead checked his wristwatch. "It's getting late, Roy. We should head back home and look for Marth tomorrow."

"But Dad, it's only nine!" Roy protested after checking the time on his phone. "There are other places to look for Marth!"

"It's not safe to be here this late." Eliwood argued calmly, trying not to raise his voice. "Please understand, Roy."

Roy looked around the wharf for a brief second. His father was correct. Nearly all of the stores were closed, their windows dark in sleep. There was not a single person other than them in sight. It was unpredictable of what could happen next. "Fine..." Roy huffed in defeat. He suddenly thought of something. "Hey Dad, can we look on the beach before we leave?"

"It's dark, Roy." Eliwood stated sternly. "Even if it is safe, we still cannot see anything."

"Then why did we bring flashlights?!" Roy exclaimed, trying to urge his father. "Dad, didn't you find Marth on the beach when you first met him? He could be there waiting for us!"

Eliwood gave his son a small frown. His son did have good points. "Ok, Roy." he replied with a small smile. "Let's look for Marth there."

Roy thanked Eliwood with a smile and a nod.

Marth shivered violently as he swam towards the shore of the Smashburg beach. The salty, freezing water slammed into his face, causing him to squint his eyes and sputter for cool air. Looking back at the tiny island where the facility stood, he spotted searchlights frantically darting around the area, desperately looking for their precious escapee. It nearly looked like it was decorated with Christmas decorations, only that it gave onlookers a sense of panic, not celebration.

Once when his bare feet touched the soft, gritty, wet sand, Marth collapsed onto his knees. Water splashed onto his trembling body and soaked his thin, fluorescent-blue clothes. Through, Marth did not care. He was free! Free from his hellish nightmare.

With a weary smile, Marth shakily stood up and tried to walk. An abrupt twinge in his shaking legs caused him to collapse back onto the damp ground. Marth quietly whined to himself as he hugged himself tightly for warmth.

"How long was I swimming?" Marth asked himself, his voice quivering. "It's s-so cold..."

A dizzy spell struck Marth, causing him to wobbly tilt over. He barely broke his fall with his numb hands.

"I feel so t-tired..." Marth dimly mumbled to himself, shivering as the wind whistled in his ears.

Roy frantically pointed his flashlight around the beach. "Marth?! Maaarth?!" he called.

The redhead ignored the annoying sand tumbling into his shoes. He ran as quickly as he could in the lumpy dunes.

"Do you see him?!" Eliwood shouted through the blowing wind.

"No, I don't!" Roy responded, his teeth clattering. He looked around the shady shorelines of the beach, and noticed a shadowy, darker figure. "Wait, I see something!"

"Maaarth?!" Marth's cerulean's eyes widened and anxiously looked around. That voice... Could it be?

"...W-Woy?" Marth softly asked in disbelief. He tried to stand up and run to the source of the voice. His aching legs reduced his dash into a trudging limp, which turned into a stumble. Marth cried as he fell face-first into the sand.

"Marth?!" Roy shouted, trying to identify the figure. "Is that you?!"

He pointed his flashlight at the shadow, illuminating a familiar speck of blue.

"Dad!" Roy cried out excitedly, turning to his father while pointing frantically. "I think I see him! I think I see him!"

Eliwood tried to look at where Roy was pointing as his son hurried away. "Hmmm?" he hummed in confusion. Due to his age, a phone booth in comparison to Roy's cell phone, his eyesight was not as well as Roy's.

As he shakily got up, Marth's heart began to beat excitedly, not from panic and anxiety, but from joy and hope. Ignoring the twinge that sliced and swelled in his muscles like bubbles, he unsteadily stood up and tried to run towards the direction of Roy's voice. The pair of legs clumsily stumbled through the wet sand.

"W...W-Woy?" he asked, his cerulean sparkling in hope and his lips curving in a cheery smile. "Wooooy!" he screamed in joy when the running redhead's flashlight shone on him.

"Marth!" Roy cried out as he dropped his flashlight and opened his arms out wide.

His lips trembling, Marth collapsed with a loud, joyful cry, which eventually turned into hysterical sobbing. Tears washing down his face, he buried his wet, pink face into Roy's thinner, smaller shoulder. Roy had never been hugged so hard in his life. The bluenet was embracing so tightly, he thought that his ribs were going to crack.

"Wooooy!" Marth howled uncontrollably, hiccuping stridently. "I was so scaaaared! Waaaah!"

Roy groaned in pain and tried to move in a comfortable position. "Marth, you're choking me... What happened?"

Marth did not answer Roy's question. Lost in his overexcited, overjoyed emotions, he continued to bawl stridently.

Roy gave Marth a few pats on his shaking back before stroking his soaked, azure hair. "Marth, it's ok. I'm here."

A shaky nod was Marth's respond with the following of small, softer hiccups and a slow release. Marth clumsily sat down on the sand.

Eliwood eventually arrived at the scene. "Marth, are you ok?!" he worried asked as he took off his blue overcoat and put it on the shivering, fatigued young man. "You're cold!"

Marth only nodded yes and clutched the coat closer to his freezing body.

"Let's go, Marth." Roy said, standing up. "Let's go back home and clean you up."

"Yes..." Marth tiredly replied. He tiredly smiled and tried to walk after the two redheads, only to collapsed onto his knees and winced in pain. His muscles were cramped with aches, feeling like multiple knives sticking into his sensitive flesh.

"Oh, you're tired..." Eliwood spoke in concern as he carefully helped Marth up. "Lean on my body. I'll help you walk."

Marth flushed slightly. "I... Well... I was—"

Eliwood instantly cut Marth's sentence off. "Not now, Marth. We'll ask you what happened later. For now, save your energy."

Marth nodded and grabbed ahold of Eliwood's shoulder. Although this method helped him walk for a few moments, when the three arrived at a flight of stairs leading towards the sidewalks, he began to feel a bit sick and lightheaded. The dizziness threatened to make him faint. His grip slowly began to loosen on Eliwood's shoulder.

Eliwood noticed that something was not right when he heard Marth groan feebly. "Roy, can you help Marth?"

"Yes." Roy said as he allowed Marth to grab ahold of his shoulder. With that, the two redheads helped the bluenet unsteadily walk up the stairs.

"Are you still there, Marth?" Eliwood asked Marth when they finally reached the top of the stairs and began to head towards the car, which was parked close by.

"Yes..." Marth dimly mumbled. Eliwood's eyes narrowed in nervousness. Marth sounded so weak. He probably would not be able to walk back to their car. "Don't worry, I can make it..." he tried to reassure.

"If you say so..." Eliwood responded, still doubtful.

As the three approached the car, Marth suddenly felt dizzier than before. He tried to ignore the nauseous feeling at first. The car was a few steps away! He could make it!

However, as he walked closer to the vehicle, he began to feel a sharp, stinging ache jabbing in the soft regions of his head. Marth groaned and halted wobbly in his path.

"Marth, what's wrong?" Roy questioned.

"Head...ache..." Marth only mumbled before tumbling onto the concrete ground, dragging both Roy and Eliwood with him. He lost his consciousness before impacting the ground.

"Marth?!" Roy cried out in panic, trying to shake the bluenet awake. "Marth! Dad, call the ambulance!"

Eliwood quickly took his phone out and was about to dial 911, when he noticed something odd about Marth's clothes. He just realized that he was not wearing his dress shirt for work; he was wearing fluorescent blue clothing that gave a bad vibe. That color... Did he escape from...?

"Dad, what are you waiting for?!" Roy asked, clutching Marth protectively.

"We can't take him to the hospital." Eliwood bluntly said.

"What...?" Roy was confused.

"We need to take Marth home." Eliwood continued. "He's helpless if he's out in public like this."

"Four murders last night?!" Liza gasped, covering her mouth lightly with her hand.

"Yes, four murders." Cornelius bluntly confirmed, looking up from his newspaper. He tightly clutched the feeble paper in shock, though his expression attempted to hide it. "Apparently, Cia was one of the victims."

"What?! Why?!" Liza tried to bottle in her tears. Her efforts were futile, though. Tears struggled to come out of her eyes. "Was the killer caught?"

"No." Cornelius did not bother to look up from his paper. "There was no evidence found at the crime scenes. The police are baffled."

"Whyy..." Liza began to weep. She took a small handkerchief from her robe's pocket and frantically wiped the tears from her eyes. "Cia, why...?"

Unlike the majority of the Lowell family, who were bewildered, disgusted, and anguished by the devastating, tragic murder, Marth simply minded his own business and continued to eat his cereal. His sneaky cerulean eyes darted to Elice, who reassumed texting to her boyfriend. Darn it, did she need to spend every waking minute with her boyfriend? He then glanced at Liza, who continued to weep hysterically. Why did she care about that witch Cia so much? The only reason why she met her was to make him take those dreaded, torturous classes! Trying not to make eye contact, Marth glowered at Cornelius. Why was he not comforting his own wife? What kind of a husband was he?

"Better not say anything, so they won't suspect me." Marth thought to himself as he finished his breakfast. He was about to exit the kitchen unnoticed when he heard his father call his name.

"Marth." Keeping a deadpan expression, Marth turned to face Cornelius.

"Yes, Father?" Marth asked calmly.

Cornelius stood from his seat and motioned to his son to follow him. "I need to talk to you. Come with me."

"Yes, Father." Marth replied in a monotone voice.

Marth followed Cornelius out of the kitchen. There, in the living room, Cornelius said, "Had you heard what happened last night?"

Marth dimly nodded and tried to stiff a yawn. "Yes, there were four murders." he answered. "Cia is among the victims."

"Correct. Since your tutor is gone, I..." Cornelius paused. How should he explain this?

"Go on." Marth urged. "I am listening."

"I will teach you in her place." Cornelius finished with a sigh. Teaching the smaller, younger bluenet ought to be frustrating, judging from his past lessons with Cia.

Marth felt his heart flip-flop. "Oh." he quickly said, hiding his shock.

"'Oh?' What did you mean by that?" Cornelius asked, sensing his son's protest.

"It's just that..." Marth tried to think of an excuse. "Cia was a...g-great tutor!" he finished, trying to fake his tears and sorrowful expression. "I didn't expect her to die! I should've done better in her lessons!"

"Marth, don't give me that teary look." Cornelius bluntly ordered.

"...Huh?" Marth responded with large, sad puppy eyes.

"The sons of the Lowell family never cry. We hide our sorrow. That's how we become much stronger." Cornelius bluntly stated before walking away, back into the kitchen. "I will begin our lessons today." he added.

Marth pretended to sniff and shakily wipe his tears away as he began to head up the stairs. With every step, his somber, sorrowful expression slowly turned into a bitter look, medicine mixed with lemons and limes.

"Hmmph. Don't cry." Marth sourly said to himself. "I wasn't crying. I was just pretending! At least my father thought I was crying. He could've given me a hug."

A few hours later, Marth found himself in the living room, standing directly in front of his own intimidating father. He tried to make eye contact with Cornelius and not cower so he could not show any weakness. This was it! He could not mess up! He needed to put that mask on!

"I am ready, Father." he spoke, trying to sound brave.

"Very well." Cornelius replied.

"So, what is our lesson going to be on today?" Marth asked.

"Pretending to hit someone." Cornelius answered. "I would like you to attempt to indirectly hit me." he ordered.

With a small, understanding nod, Marth took a bold step back. His hands shaking slightly, he attempted to swing his fist at his father, only to stop at the last minute. He did not daringly want to hit his own father, who was a lion in comparison to the mouse known as Marth.

"Too slow." Cornelius criticized. "It needs to be swifter."

"How?" Marth asked himself as he pulled his right fist back. *"I shouldn't ask him, though."*

As hard and quick as he could be, Marth took another aim at Cornelius. It would have been perfect if he successfully stopped in front of his target.

"Ahh!" Cornelius exclaimed, only clutching his stomach in attempt to show no weakness.

Marth gasped, he really did it now! "Father! F-Forgive me!" he nervously stuttered as his mask slowly shattered into pieces.

Cornelius shot a spiteful, angry glare at Marth. "My son, do you know what I meant by, 'indirect contact'?"

"I think I know." Marth answered, preparing for the worst.

"It means that you don't actually hit the person like this!" Without warning, Cornelius slammed his fist into Marth's

stomach, sending him tumbling onto the ground with a cry.

"Do you understand now, Marth?" Cornelius asked, glowering down at Marth.

Marth fearfully looked up at his heartless, bitter father with large eyes. He wanted to cry. He wanted to run upstairs and lock himself in his room. But, he was so close? Maybe he could fix things by gluing his mask back into one piece!

With a weak smile, Marth unsteadily stood up. "Yes, I understand Father."

Eliwood gently brushed Marth's azure bangs off his boiling, red forehead before placing a cold cloth on it. From the moment he and Roy finally arrived home from the beach, Marth suddenly struck with an awful fever. At a dangerous 102.8 degrees, it was a magical, dark spell that cursed the young man with burning pulses cycling throughout his body, a stinging, sore throat, dizziness, and thrashing in sleep. Though, Marth appeared to be sleeping much peacefully at the moment. He softly bit the thermometer wedged in between his lips and shifted in his sleep.

"How is Marth?" Roy asked.

Eliwood carefully took the thermometer out of Marth's mouth and read it. "Not well." he answered, raising a brow in concern. "His temperature is at 102.8 degrees."

"Then make him see a doctor!" Roy responded. "Look, I don't want Marth to boil himself to death!"

"We can't!" Eliwood protested. He roughly threw the covers off Marth's body, revealing Marth's fluorescent blue clothes. Marth only twitched and stirred.

"Why?!" Roy asked again, getting impatient.

"Marth escaped from the insane asylum!" Eliwood answered, his navy blue eyes wide as saucers.

Roy was bewildered. "What...? How do you know?"

"In the facility, every patient wears these clothes." Eliwood explained, trying to calm down. "So if one were to escape, people can easily identify him and bring him back to the asylum. Also, every police station and hospital is alerted of such escapes."

"...Whoa..." Roy could only say.

"To be honest, I'm not surprised that Marth has a fever." Eliwood added. "The sanitation in the asylum is poor." He felt Marth's forehead again and sighed in worry.

"What's wrong, Dad?" Roy asked.

"Marth's fever isn't going down..." Eliwood said. "I'm going to get some medicine for him." he added before walking out of Roy's room.

Eliwood went into the bathroom, where he opened the cabinet and took a small bottle of medicine. As he closed it, he suddenly thought of something.

"Marth shouldn't take this medicine on an empty stomach." he said to himself as he left the bathroom and went downstairs to the kitchen.

Lyn walked pass Eliwood when she entered Roy's room. "Roy, how's Marth doing?" she asked.

"Not good." Roy sighed sadly. "His fever is pretty high."

Lyn gave her stepson a small hug. "It's ok, Marth is back with us at least."

"Yeah... I'm just wondering why the asylum would take Marth." Roy responded.

"...The asylum?!" Lyn asked doubtfully. That was shot out of the air abruptly.

"I know!" Roy yelled boisterously. "I don't get it either! Did the asylum just picked Marth off the street for no reason?!"

Roy regretted shouting at the top of his voice. As soon as he finished his sentence, Marth began to fiercely toss and turn in Roy's bed. He whimpered agonizingly as his faces twisted into different shapes, reflecting his fear and discomfort.

"Mom, what's happening?" Roy asked.

"It's just a fever dream Marth is having." Lyn tried to reassure. To be honest, Lyn did not know what was actually happening to Marth. She was just assuming. "Let me try to drop his fever." she said as she swiftly took the now-warm cloth off Marth's head and hurried into the bathroom.

As soon as Lyn left the room, Marth suddenly rolled off Roy's bed, the sheets tumbling after him. Despite the painful this, Marth continued to struggle in his dream. He eventually curled into a defensive ball and clutched his covers tightly.

"Marth! Marth!" Roy was beginning to panic. "Marth! Are you ok?! Wake up!"

Calmly coming up the stairs holding a tray with the bottle of medicine and a bowl full of macaroni and cheese, Eliwood heard Roy screaming Marth's name, which set off an alarm and hundreds of red lights. This could not be good! What happened to Marth?! Not wasting any time, Eliwood dropped the tray and hurried up the stairs. He heard the clattering sounds and a shatter, but he did not care. The sickly Marth was on his top priority.

"What happened?!" Eliwood asked worriedly, hurrying into Roy's room. Lyn followed him with the freshly-damp cloth in her hand.

"I don't know! Marth just fell of his bed!" Roy answered as he moved aside to let his father through.

Eliwood kneeled down next to Marth. "Marth, it's me." he calmly said, trying to soothe the bluenet by stroking his bangs. "It's me, don't be scared."

With a lax, puny sound, Marth cautiously opened his cerulean eyes and looked around his blurry soundings. Where was he? He repeatedly blinked, clearing his vision.

"Everything is ok." Eliwood said tenderly, so he would not excite Marth again. He sensibly took Marth into his arms and hugged him gently.

Once when he realized where he was and who was embracing him, Marth abruptly hugged Eliwood back, squeezing the poor older redhead. He did not know why, but he awfully wanted a hug specifically from Eliwood. Roy was about to pry Marth off his father, when Lyn set a small hand on his shoulder, stopping him in his path.

"Urk, Marth... N-Not so hard...!" Eliwood barely managed to say.

"...Sorry." Marth inaudibly replied as he released him from his tight, constricting grip. "Were you worried about me, Mr. Eliwood?"

Eliwood was taken aback by the sudden question. "Er, yes. Of course I was worried! You fell off your bed and Roy was shouting your name!"

Marth just smiled and return, confusing Eliwood.

"Well, I'll make a small dinner for you, Marth." Eliwood spoke awkwardly as he remembered the mess he made at the stairs and left the room.

Marth attempted to follow Eliwood, only to be stopped Lyn. "Marth, let's get you cleaned up now." she said as she began to wipe Marth's sweltering forehead with the cloth.

"Y-Yes..." Marth replied.

As Lyn and Roy painstakingly lead the weary, frail Marth to the bathroom, Marth began to question his dream. He knew the characters' faces at some part of his life, but how were they connected to him? Yet, it was least of his wonders. What interested Marth the most was the appearance of the little azure-haired boy who looked identical to him.

Author's Notes: Totally worth staying up and finishing this chapter.

I decided to try to finish as much chapters as I can, so here's chapter 26! So far, this is my longest fanfic. Yep, no gore and violence in this chapter, I couldn't squeeze it into this chapter for a strange reason. Speaking of violence, judging by some reviews, I think it's safe to leave this story rated T. I think this story is about 75% finished; I'm not really sure to be honest.

Story Questions:

Any suggestions on how the Masked Slasher (Aka Marth) should be caught by police?

Why did Marth want to embrace Eliwood?

Who do you think is the best father in this story? The worst?

Chapter 27: Chapter 27

Bathed and dressed. That was what Marth did before he found himself staring at the bowl of macaroni and cheese sitting on the table in front of him. A small cup of soothing milk sat next to it.

Marth's stomach growled hungrily before the bluenet began devouring the cheesy pasta. Although it as a common, everyday food, Marth hurriedly wolfed it down like a mythical Hydragon. Its warm, rich taste caused Marth to salivate like an Arcanine looking at a piece of fresh, raw meat. It had been hours since he had his last meal. The facility did not even bother to feed its victims.

As he drunk his milk, another question came to Marth. Why was he captured by the mysterious, evil facility? Did he unintentionally do something that offended them? Judging by the other prisoners, that was not the case. They were probably snatched off the streets like him.

Pondering a question was quite exhausting when one was ill. Marth yawned softly as he tried to think of an answer to his question. He unconsciously set the side of his head on the table before drifting to sleep.

The lunchroom was buzzing with the news of the four murders. When the principle announced the tragic deaths of three of the students, one expected the school to show remorse. The reality was, no one cared about Mido's, Gangrel's and Wolf's death. Most of the students were either horrified or *amazed* by the mysterious serial killer.

The views on the murderer depended on the student's personality. For those who were raised morally and viewed life as a precious thing, they were disgusted by the committed actions. They saw the murderer as one who should be eliminated immediately, as he posed as a threat to society. He added to list of the many things that prevented Smashburg from becoming a utopian society. However, some had different opinions, mainly the ones who did not have the same good opportunities as others. They found the killer awesome, as his blood shedding deeds represented the anger and grudges they held against the city.

Being a loner outside the social circle had its advantages. Due to not being glued into a clique, one is allowed to roam around the room and listen into others' conversations without being noticed. Loners were shadows. They existed, yet they were not widely noticed. As Marth carried his lunch to his secluded, small table, he purposely overheard his peers' conversation.

"Had you heard of the murders that happened over the weekend?!" Ingio asked his friends, looking up from his cellphone. "Pretty scary stuff if you ask me!"

"I know!" Daisy added. "Everything happened in Smashburg! I'm not sure if I should feel safe here anymore! So far, five people who go to our school died!"

"Well, the murders occurred during the night." Robin, the intellect of the group spoke up. "We just need to be careful at night."

"I'm not sure about that!" Lucina added. "I heard that the autopsy on the first two victims revealed that they were killed during the daytime."

"I still think they were killed and their bodies were dumped in the junkyard!" Owain commented in awe. "Like in the horror movies!"

Lucina sighed. "Owain, don't tell me that you are amazed by the serial killer. You know that he murdered people, right?"

"I know!" Owain responded. "It's just that, I never knew that something like this would happen here!"

Marth sarcastically scoffed to himself as he finished his cookie. *"Yep, thanks to idiots like you."*

"I hope that the serial killer gets caught soon." Lucina continued. "Whoever commits such crimes is a burden to society and has no life!" Her friends nodded, agreeing with her statement.

At that moment, Severa and her friend Kjelle passed by the cliques. Due to the cafeteria seats and tables being full, they needed to find a place to sit outside of the food court.

"Hey Severa, where did you get those shoes? From the garbage dump?" Daisy called, making all of her friends laugh hysterically at the poor, red-haired girl.

"Let's go." Kjelle quickly said before Severa had the chance to retort to the insult. She knew how violent the situation could become. "Ignore them!"

"Oh Kjelle, is that muscle or flab? I can't tell the difference!" Daisy called after the two leaving friends before giggling along with her friends.

Marth could only huff angrily to himself at the obnoxious clique. Unfortunately, this was still considered to be a normal day in school. *"I don't think laughing at other people to make your pathetic self look better makes you have a life."* he mentally said to himself. *"I better leave soon. If I watch them any longer, I can end up like them."*

Just as Marth stood up from his seat and dumped his trash into the garbage bin, Lucina suddenly stood up and went to him. "Marth, I need to talk to you." she spoke.

Marth smiled softly. "Yes, what is?"

"Come out here." Lucina led Marth out of the cafeteria into the empty, silent hallway. "Now, in eighth period, we are doing another lab. Is that right?"

"Yes, I think so." Marth clarified.

"Please understand that we need to get an A on this!" Lucina sternly said. "You know how much our last lab dropped my grade? It dropped it to a B! A B!"

"I understand." Marth replied. "I apologize for my fumbling efforts in last class. I just could not understand the directions. If we all could just work together, maybe we could—"

"Maybe you could not understand the directions because one of your eyes is closed." Lucina interrupted, oblivious to how rude she was sounding. "This time, try to open both of them."

"Don't worry, I'll try!" Marth assured with a cheery smile. Once when Lucina was gone, Marth twisted his grin into a twisted smirk.

"My eyes are open. I can see." he thought, smirking to himself. *"Are your eyes opened?"*

"I'm home!" Marth exclaimed as he entered his home. He softly locked the door and looked around for his parents. "Mother? Father?"

No one was home. A bit confused, Marth went into the kitchen, a room that was just as quiet as the living room. He walked around before his eyes caught a small note clipped onto the fridge by a red magnet. Something was on the blank fridge! It got to be important. With a raised brow and a crossed smile, Marth took the note and read its short message.

"So, Mother and Father are busy and Elice is going to watch me?" Marth asked himself calmly as he put the net back on its original place. "I don't mind! Elice is going to be here in a few minutes! Maybe I should go make something for her..."

Marth hurried upstairs and quickly dumped his stuff, before hurrying back into the kitchen. He clumsily poked his nosy into every food drawer. Of course, he could look into the refrigerator, but Marth did not know how to cook complicated foods such as steaks and stew. He did not want to risk giving himself and Elice food poisoning, let alone burning the entire house down.

After a few moments, Marth finally decided on spaghetti. After he boiled some water, he began to pour the pasta into the water and stir it gently with a large wooden spoon. At the same time, he was struggling to heat the sauce. While he was carefully stirring the tomato sauce, the pot holding the cooking pasta would make gurgling, grumpy popping. Warm bubbles would bobble and bang on the protective cover, making Marth suspect that it was about to explode. Whenever he carefully lifted the cover to stir the bubbling spaghetti, he was met with an explosion— an explosion of boiling, hot steam that stung his unprotected fingers if he lifted the cover too quickly. As he stirred, he would take a tiny string of spaghetti and softly nibble it to test its texture. This meal had to be perfect! It was made for his beloved sister!

It took Marth twenty minutes to finish the simple yet time-consuming meal. When he finished decorating the plain, yellow strings with the tomato-red sauce, he heard the front door creak open. That must be Elice!

With a huge smile, Marth excitedly hurried into the living room. "Elice!" he exclaimed. "I made some spaghetti for—!"

A record scratched as Marth realized the awkward situation he molded with his own hands. Yes, Elice did arrive home, but was she with someone? Standing next to her with his hand grasped gently around Elice's was her boyfriend

Ellerean. He was a tall with an average build, wavy blond hair, and cold, hazel eyes.

"...Elice? Who's that?" Marth softly asked.

"Oh, this is Ellerean, my boyfriend." Elice introduced. "Ellerean, I don't think you know Marth, do you?"

"No, I don't." Ellerean responded in a monotone voice. "It's nice meeting you, Marth."

The first impression of Ellerean Marth got was quote negative. Ellerean was a brick wall that supported Elice's castle. Yes, he seemed useful, but he was just a plain red, brick wall. He was not interstng and fun to be with. Also, Ellerean's merciless eyes were signs engraved in the rock. Did he know how to show affection? Did he even care about his loved ones?

"Well, I just made some spaghetti, but I didn't make enough. I'll make more!" Marth spoke, trying to resolve the strange situation he was in.

"It's ok, Marth!" Elice tenderly rejected to the generous offer. "We already got something to eat! Help yourself!" She gently hugged Ellerean, who did not bother returning the embrace.

"Ok, if you say so!" Marth said bubbly.

Marth cheerfully sat at the dining table and began to eat his share of spaghetti. He eyed the extra plate of pasta sitting in front of him. Well, he could always put it in the refrigerator and save it for later. Or maybe, he could throw it into Ellerean's face and see what happens! He probably would not care! He was as responsive as a rock!

No, throwing a plate of food was not enough to settle and extinguish the green flame burning in his emotions. Like the water in the pot over the stove, jealousy itself was boiling in his heart. Marth knew that Elice would give anything to be with her boyfriend, even though he was just another plain, old rock. He just wanted her attention and love that vanished few years ago. How could he gain it back?

As he tried to think of a solution, Marth glanced at the second plate of spaghetti. Its swirling, wavy, pale yellow pasta and deep, red sauce gave him the impression of Ellerean's lifeless, unmoving head. Marth darkly smirked to himself as the gory impression and licked his lips, which had the taste of fresh blood.

"Marth? Are you ok?"

Marth was gently awoken by Lyn's hand roughly ruffling his azure hair. With a tiny yawn, he dizzily sat back up in his chair.

"What happened?" he asked in a tired voice.

"You fell asleep." Lyn answered with a tiny smile. "You know that there are more places to sleep on other than a table, right?"

That was when Marth noticed the annoying ache in his back. "I guess so..."

"Let's get ready for bed." Lyn spoke. "I think it would be very uncomfortable if you had a toothache and a fever!"

"Mmmm hmmm." Marth just hummed as he and Lyn walked out of the dining room and entered the stairs. As they walked up the creaking stairs, which squeaked under their tremendous weight, Marth felt a tingle of faintness and clutched the stair's railing for support. It was a bit odd. Why was he having so many headaches all of a sudden? Maybe they were symptoms of his fever...

"You ok?" Lyn asked in concern. The last thing she wanted to see today was Marth tumbling down the stairs.

"Yes, I'm just tired." Marth wearily answered. "Mrs. Lyn, do you love Woy and Mr. Eliwood?" he suddenly asked.

"Er, yes! I do love Roy and Eliwood!" Lyn was stunned by Marth's abrupt question. "If I didn't, then why would I even bother marrying Eliwood in the first place?"

"Well, some people just marry for money not love." Marth added as the two continued their way up the stairs.

Lyn chuckled. "Well, not in this marriage. Marth, you don't need to worry about us." she said as they reached the top of the stairs. The green-haired woman gave Marth a small smooch on the forehead. Marth's face turned pink; it was obvious that it was from embarrassment, not his fever.

When Marth entered the bathroom and began to brush his teeth, he began to worry about the Pherae family. He did not want anything to go wrong in the family! He wanted the three to eternally stay happy, not separate themselves in little, cramped cages!

But, Eliwood had a successful career. He remarried with the woman he loved and improved his relationship with his depressed son. Since they have related jobs, it was obvious that Lyn did not marry for money. If she did, she would not have married another man, who was richer than Eiwood! Last, Roy was showing signs of recovering from depression. An obvious sign was not sulking from his new family. Though, he still kept his trashy mouth.

Another question came into play. Why was Marth so worried about the Pherae family? They seemed to be well off. So why was Marth concerned about the wellbeing of his adoptive family?

"I think my fever is driving me nuts." Marth thought to himself as he washed his face with cold water.

Ready for bed, Marth entered Roy's room. Instead of seeing the smaller redhead in his bed, he saw him lying in *his* sleeping bag. Marth blinked several times to make sure he was not hallucinating. Was something loose in Roy's head? Why was he in his sleeping bag? When one experienced the softness and comfort of a bed, it would be difficult for him to sleep on the ground in a simple bag.

"Um, Woy?" Marth softly spoke as he carefully entered the dark room.

"Yeah? What's wrong?" Roy asked, turning to looking at Marth.

"You're in my bed..." Marth replied.

"Well, Dad asked me if I can let you sleep in my bed for tonight." Roy explained. "He thinks it will help you get better sleep."

"Is it ok?"

"Yeah! I don't want you to be sick! I want you to get better!" Roy clarified.

With a thanking nod, Marth clumsily got into Roy's bed. He crawled underneath the covers and tightly embraced the blanket, it was good to sleep in an actual bed for once.

Marth huffed and looked at Roy, whose appearance suddenly injected a question into his head. "Hey Woy?" he quietly asked, so he would it startle Roy. His question was answered with silence.

"Woy?" Marth asked again. "Can I ask you something?"

No answer. With a loud sigh, Marth assumed that Roy had already fallen asleep, leaving him with a nagging desire for an answer. No matter what the circumstances were, Marth did not want Roy to run off with someone else and leave him in the dust in the process.

For most people, nighttime was a time of rest. In the lavish, rich neighborhoods of Smashburg, the majority of the houses were pitch black with tones of dark colors and shadows. The only things that ripped the darkness apart with warm, orange lights were the tall streetlights. People who had a phobia of the dark found them reassuring, even comforting.

To Marth however, streetlights were just an obstacle for him to avoid as he dashed through the streets.

Much to Marth's relief, his next victim lived quite close to him. That was because she was nearly a carbon copy of him. She had the color of his eyes and hair, the superior, above-normal intelligence, and the exact reputation to hold. The only difference was, she was accepted and her eyes were often closed.

When he approached the gates, Marth carefully pushed it open. His senses perked up and his hands were jittery, since he expected an alarm to go off. The silence itself made him nervous. Once when the gates were open enough, Marth anxiously looked around his surroundings for any spying eyes. His stomach turned and bubbled with his beating heart as he began to run towards the exquisite mansion. Although it looked nearly identical to his home, the area had a pleasant, tender aura, in contrast to his home's intimidating, ominous atmosphere.

"If I remember correctly, her room is next to that tree." Marth approached a towering oak tree. Its powerful branches twisted in different directions, the majority pointing to a large window. With great skill and strength, Marth silently climbed the tree, his foot slightly scratching the rough bark.

Approaching the window, Marth noticed that it was completely open. The only thing that was blocking his way was a thin screen. It might be efficient in preventing pesky insects from entering the house, but that did not mean it could keep an enraged, bloodthirsty killer out.

Tightly clutching the branches with one had for support, Marth carefully cut the screen off with his dagger. Whenever the branches creaked underneath his weight, he would freeze and glance around for any eyes. His legs were tense, preparing to lunch their owner off the branch if anyone showed up.

After a few moments, Marth finally managed to cut the window screen off. His legs trembling wildly, he stealthily stepped into the window with a tiny grunt. Now that he was in the bedroom, he quickly glanced around for any persons. Marth looked at the neat, tidy bed, behind the furniture, and out the doorway.

Strangely, there was no one. Coming up with a cunning plan, Marth hurriedly raced into the closet. He sneakily hid behind the stuffy jackets, dresses, and shirts with his knife clutched in his hands. This was a perfect plan! All he needed to do was wait for her to come!

Just as he predicted, Marth heard soft footsteps entering the room. He spotted Lucina passing by his hiding place, oblivious to the uninvited intruder. Careful to not making noise, Marth cautiously stepped out of the closet and watched Lucina get into her bed with an exhausted sigh.

"Is she asleep?" Marth asked himself as he approached Lucina's bedside. *"Her eyes are closed and she is still..."* He made a noiseless thump on the ground with his foot, earning no response from the identical bluenette. *"She is asleep! That fast?"*

His hands quietly unsheathed the dagger and point the deadly weapon at its target. *"Hmmm..."* Marth thought to himself. *"Should I just finish her off quickly and run? No, I'm not going to let her go that easily..."*

Lucina was about to drift into a pleasant dream when she was startled awake by a rough hand that wrapped around her throat. With a panicked, choked cry, her trembling hands immediately grabbed her attacker's brute hand and tried to pry it off. Though he was close to her build and her size, his violent grasp was too strong.

"Who...are...you?!" Lucina managed to cough out.

"You don't know who I am?" Marth darkly replied in a low, menacing voice as he gradually loosened his grip. "You already know who I am."

Her eyes wide, Lucina stared directly at her attacker's masked face. Because her room was so dark, she could not recognize identify the masked murderer. Her sensitive eyes could only make out a shadowy silhouette of a masked person.

"Let go of me!" Lucina cried out, resulting in Marth tightening his grip.

"Nope." Marth teased with a smirk. "Not until you correctly identify me."

"I can't even see you in the dark!" Lucina protested, her voice as scratchy as sandpaper. "Just let me go!"

Marth gave his cousin a twisted frown. "Are your eyes opened?"

"Yes they are!" Lucina bluntly answered, tightly squeezing Marth's arm, hoping that the

pain would make him release his suffocating grip. "I can see your face! Just take off your mask!"

"I'm not wearing a mask." Marth continued to tease. It was fun watching one of the most so-called perfect people in the world suffer under his grip. "You must be seeing things!"

"...Liar."

With his free right hand, Marth took the dagger and began to chuckle coldly. "Maybe I can help you open your eyes when I do this!" He drove the weapon directly into Lucina's left eye and laughed evilly along with her scream of pain.

"My eye! It hurts!" Lucina shrieked as she clutched both of her eyes shut.

"Oh! You can't see me anymore..." Marth sniffed sadly. "That's fine! You do not want to see what I will next!"

Continuing to chortle hysterically, Marth set his blade on Lucina's exposed throat and was about to slice into her precious flesh when suddenly—

"Hey! The hell is happening in here?!"

"Shit." Marth grumbled to himself. "Brady's here. Looks like I need to make a run so it."

Just as when Brady entered the crime scene, he caught a glimpse of a certain masked boy climbing out of the window. "Hey, the heck did you do to my big sis?!" he shouted furiously as he raced towards the window and watched the evildoer climb down the tree. "You think ya tough?! Come and fight me, stupid!"

Marth ignored the other bluenet's angry yells and continued to run. He hurried through gate, into the open street. Darn it, this mission was a failure! A huge failure! He should have just killed her in the first place! Now, everyone would know who was the murderer!

"Damn it, I need to go home!" Marth said to himself through clenched teeth. "I need to go home!"

In a matter of a few minutes, Marth managed to arrive back at his home. He panicky climbed up the tree and leaped into his room, tumbling onto the floor with a loud thud.

Marth knew that he only had a few minutes to clean up his tracks. His hands trembling, he quickly took off his jacket, scarf, jeans, mask, and tiara and shoved them underneath his bed, where no one could see them. He then threw the covers off his bed, revealing his hidden pajamas.

"Almost there..." Marth said to himself quickly as he pulled up his pajamas pants and slipped on his shirt. "There..."

For the moment, everything was back to normal for Marth. He convinced himself that what he tried to commit a few moments ago was just an abysmal nightmare. With a shaken smile, Marth crawled into his bed.

"Everything's fine." Marth spoke to himself as he laid his head on the pillow. "Everything is okay!" he mumbled, closing his eyes.

The abrupt ring of a phone downstairs was what shattered the silence. Marth jumped and anxiously looked around his room. He heart began to pump hysterically as he suspected the caller.

Marth clutched his covers when he heard his father hurrying out of his room down the stairs. Trembling wildly, he buried his face into his shuddering knees. For the first time ever since he began to follow the voice's orders, Marth felt petrified.

"Hello?" Marth heard Cornelius say. He tried to sound calm, not cranky. "Oh, hello Chrom! Why did you call us so late?"

Swallowing anxiously, Marth slowly began to accept his fate and continued to listen to the conversation.

"What?!" he heard Cornelius exclaim. "Repeat that please. What happened?!"

Marth got out of his bed and sat against the bedroom door, listening to the conversation.

"Someone broke into your house and attacked your daughter?! Who was it?!"

"This is it..." Marth sadly sighed to himself.

"You don't know." Marth's eyes widened in bewilderment at the answer. Was he hearing thing?

At that moment, Marth limply slumped against the door and sighed in relief. He was off the hook! Due to his mask, no one knew who he was! It worked! The mask magically transformed him into a different person! According to Chrom Lowell, his little nephew Marth Lowell never broke into his home and attacked his daughter! A mysteriously masked boy committed the violent act! With a relieved hum, Marth smiled and looked up the ceiling, not listening to his father's conversation.

"I'll let my family know." Cornelius said before finishing the call with Chrom. "Liza, wake the children! We need to have a quick meeting!"

Soundless, Marth jumped back into his bed and tried to make it look like he was sleeping peacefully during this time. Closing his eyes was the exact moment when Liza quietly entered his room.

"Marth, it's me." she said as she lightly shook Marth awake. Marth made a tired noise and looked up at his mother with large, curious eyes.

"What's wrong, Mother?" Marth inaudibly asked.

"Your father wants to have a small meeting." Liza answered. "Come with me."

With a small nod, Marth followed Liza out of his room, to the hallway where Elice and Cornelius were waiting.

"I heard you talking on the phone, Father." Elice said, a bit concerned.

"Yes, about that..." Cornelius began. "An incident at Chrom's house just occurred. A stranger managed to enter his home and attack his daughter."

While Elice and Liza could only glance at each other in shock, Marth just kept his attention on his father.

"Lucina?!" Elice blurted out in shock. "Who did it and why?!"

"We don't know who committed the act and what were his intentions." Cornelius answered, shaking his head. "Chrom's son however, identified the attacker as a masked boy. They assume that the suspect is connected with the recent murders in Smashville. Luckily, Lucina did not suffer from major injuries. Though, she is currently being taken to the hospital."

"That is very scary..." Marth softly remarked. "The murderer could attack any of us!"

"That is why we need to check if our house is locked and secure." Cornelius concluded. "Before all of you return to your quarters to sleep, I want everyone to check every lock, window, and door. I do not want to be involved in any bloodbaths."

With that order, Cornelius went downstairs to strengthen the defenses of his home. While Elice and Liza left to their separate rooms in anxiety and worry, Marth coolly went back into his room and calmly shut and locked his window in front of the ancient, tall tree. He was sure that the murderer would never attack him. It would be considered suicide to do so.

Author's Notes: Still worth staying up trying to finish this chapter.

Well, I decided to upload this chapter before school starts this week. Yeah, break doesn't really last long for me. So it's back to regular, weekly updates! I'll try to update more often, but I doubt so.

Please don't mind the OOCness in the flashback chapters, especially this one. Honestly, judging by their current lifestyle, I don't think Lucina and the others are still going to have their canon personalities. I also browsed through the FE wiki and could not find any different supports for Elice other than Marth and Merric, so I chose Ellerean for Elice's first boyfriend. It makes sense to because (POSSIBLE SPOILER) both Ellerean and Merric are rivals in their games.

I know that many people are like, "What the heck, why is Lucina still alive?" now. Despite the reviewers' suggestions, it wasn't my plan to take her out in the first place. Same goes with other characters. (I'm not letting you guys know, though.)

Story Questions:

To you, who is the most relateable character in the story and why?

Who do think are going to be Marth's next victims?

(You don't need to answer this.) Out of all of my fanfics, which one do you think portrayed Marth the best?

Chapter 28: Chapter 28

People were hypocrites. When they hear of a terrible, disastrous incident that involved the many lives of their own kind, they did not bat an eye. The number of casualties was viewed as a poll, not the loss of people's innocent lives. Yet, when one tragedy happens to a single, beloved, "important" person, it was breaking news. For once, people actually care for someone other than their selfish selves.

Marth was currently experiencing an example of such hypocrisy. As he sat in the very same, lonely corner of the cafeteria, he secretly listened into his peers' conversations, which were focused on the serial killer's attempted murder on Lucina. Some warned their friends to lock their doors and windows tight before they went to sleep. Others remarked that the police were not during their jobs. In just about a week, six murders and one assault were committed. Due to the lack of evidence, the hands of justice could not pick their suspects.

Through the tone of the topic was shocking and even depressing, Marth viewed those conversations amusing like a childish cartoon. He smirked at the idol-worshippers asking themselves why would something horrible happen to Lucina?

Because she deserved it. Of course, the ignorant, thick-brained worshippers would never know the answer.

Much to Marth's surprise, a few students were quite amazed, even overjoyed by the terrifying attempted murder. Nearly like Marth, they despised Lucina. Marth did not know the reasons, though. Maybe they saw and experienced her true colors like he did. Or, they simply hated her because she was too popular. Jealousy was a toxic emotion thing that poisoned people's thought processes. However, it was hard for the common eye to notice those kind of people. They only whispered amongst themselves and their closest, trustful friends, knowing that they weight get maimed by the whole school if the wrong ear were to find out.

The greatest part of the episode however, was watching Lucina's cronies. Being her closest friends, they were the ones who took the most agonizing, painful blow to their hearts.

"I can't believe that happened to Lucina last night!" Daisy said to her clique. "Who would do such a thing?"

"I don't know, a crazy person?" Ingio replied as he solemnly shrugged.

"Do you know when she's gonna come back?" Owain asked, his voice quiet for the first time in his life.

"I'm not sure." Robin answered. "I heard that the only physical injury she got was a stab in her left eye." His statement was followed by disgusted, repulsed groans and gasps. "Rumors say that she also suffered from trauma. If these kind of injuries are great enough, Lucina needs consoling."

"Oh my gosh!" Daisy exclaimed, her eyes bulging out of their sockets. "That's so horrible! If we can, we can visit Lucina in the hospital after school today! Poor thing..."

Marth pretended to not hear Daisy's suggestions and continued to eat his lunch. To be honest with himself, whenever he saw someone receiving any forms of kindness and affection—whether it would be a small Valentine's Day gift, saying "Hello, how are you?", or writing a get-well card to someone ill with the flu, he felt repulsed like the positive ends of a magnet. Because he hardly received the vaccine ever month, he had no immunity to love. As a result, even the sight of love made him violently ill.

It just was not fair. Why could not everyone receive the same treatment? Those who had great virtues such as intelligence and charisma always received respect and dignity from the start. The rest who were not born with those traits would try to work hard to reach those virtues, only to barely acquire them or never reach them at all.

Marth scoffed to himself. Who needed love? Love was the forbidden fruit of human emotions. Its sweetness, which resembled the flavor of sugary, syrup-flavored candies, was pleasing to the tongue, but was powerful through to cause stomachaches and even cavities. Yes, it felt great to be loved, but those feelings might turn against each other day.

"You know what, I can't believe the police hasn't gotten the killer!" Ingio exclaimed. "Shouldn't they at least know how he looks like?!"

"Actually, they managed to get a small physical description from Lucina's dad." Owain responded.

There was a moment of silence among Owain's friend.

"What is it?" Robin asked.

"The killer was a masked figure dressed in black." Owain paused for a looming, dramatic effect. "He was armed with a knife as sharp as Grimea's fangs and always had an evil smirk on his face! His eyes shimmer with the heartless intent to kill!"

"...Owain, your description is making me think that you are making this up!" Daisy remarked doubtfully.

"No, it's true!" Owain retorted crossly. "It's legitimate! Brady texted me last night!" The blond showed his friends his recent texts on his phone for proof. "The policemen also gave a name to the unknown killer!"

"What is it?!" Ingio asked, a bit excited.

"The Masked Slasher!" Owain oohed.

"That's a stupid name." Daisy remarked rudely. "You're definitely making this up. I was expected something more serious."

"If you don't believe me, ask Brady!" Owain responded. "Don't be a party pooper, Daisy!"

"I'm not being a party pooper!" Daisy lashed back, beginning an argument.

"Yes you are!"

"Hey guys, stop this..." Robin spoke up, his words buried underneath the bicker. Ingio just rolled his eyes.

Taking one last look at the bickering clique, Marth silently left the cafeteria. Yes, he knew that Lucina did not die, failing his intentions. Yes, he knew that the police got a description of him. However, he did not care.

He knew that the policemen have not yet gotten a suspect. If they did however, it was likely it would not be him. His shell was a typical blue-haired adolescent that concealed the murderous feelings held in his heart. If by chance, he was caught red-handed in his crimes, he would not need to fret. As long as he had his precious mask over his face and a quick escape plan, nobody would discover who he was.

"Masked Slasher... I like that alias." Marth thought to himself as he purged into his dark thoughts.

As he began his trip back home, Marth passed by the public elementary school once again. It was the same as always; children rushing out to the playground to play games with their friends, calmly walking down the streets back home while chatting quietly, and getting into their parents' car. The children were polar opposites of his peers in school. They were innocence of the murders that occurred recently. Ignorance was thought as a disadvantage, but to them, it mentally protected them. Without something to latch onto the heads and bring them down, they could live comfortably with no worries.

Their parents were a different story however. As some guided their children to their vehicles, Marth noticed a few guardians warily glancing around their surroundings. To some people, they were just carefully looking for any passing vehicles before crossing the street. To Marth however, they were nervously eyeing for ominous signs of the Masked Slasher stealthily stalking them for his sadistic pleasure. It was quite amusing to Marth. They were looking everywhere but at him. He could watch his bloody accomplishments take its toll on the citizen of Smashburg, the city that was filled with filthy human beings.

"W-Wink!" Marth suddenly heard a soft, jolly voice cry out. "What are we going?" He looked across the street and saw two, Hylian children walking down the street towards their apartment, which was a few blocks away.

The oldest Hylian, a ten-year-old boy with elven, pointy ears, dirty-blond hair, and calm azure hair, smiled back at his little brother, who was no older than five resembled a toy doll. "We're going back home, Toon." Link replied.

"But you said dat we'ew going to the awcade after school!" Toon pouted childishly.

Link smiled sadly, as he felt his heartstrings pluck painfully. "Mom and Dad told me no last night."

"Why?"

"They said that they want us to concentrate on our schoolwork." Link explained. "Well, for me anyway. I hadn't been turning in some homework. Maybe if I finish some work and do some chores, I can convince them to take you to the arcade!"

"Weally?" Toon's eyes were wide in awe. "Do it! Do your work!"

Link laughed cheerfully. "I'll do my work, don't worry!"

Unbeknownst to the two pointy-eared blonds, Marth was glowering sinisterly at them with a vile glare. As he began to continue his way back home, his loathing grew larger as furious thoughts plunged into the depth of his minds.

As a proud, egoistical, unsatisfied, even selfish human, Marth never liked members of other tribes, such as Hylians, Angels, and Anthropomorphics. Their rank as a minority was offset by their unique abilities. While Hylians had sensitive hearing, Angels could soar through the sky, and the Anthropomorphics had a heightened sixth sense. Due to their distinctive gifts, they often made humans look inferior. The humans responded to this fact with jealousy and prejudice, which resulted in bitterness between the two sides.

However, the resentment between humans and the other tribes eventually weakened over time. The two sides began to accept each other. Through, this did not erase the hatred completely. The sickness could affect anyone depending on their upbringing. Sadly, the sickness managed to spread to Marth. His thought that his life could have been easier if he had one of the tribe's skills. However, life was unfair. Due to possibility, he was born as a plain, common human. With his family's influences, his revulsion towards the other tribes grew.

"What a life I have." Marth grumbled sarcastically to himself. *"These Hylians are much happier than me."*

"Just look at yourself. You're so unhappy... While they're happy."

Marth gasped and glanced around in shock. "Is that you?!" he exclaimed, stopping in his path.

"Yes, it's me. What are you doing?! Isn't this world supposed to be your utopian haven?"

"I tried to get rid of the things bothering me!" Marth responded. "It's just not working!"

"Maybe there are still some obstacles you need to overcome and defeat." The voice suggested. *"Also, if you're really that unhappy, I know something that could boost your spirits."*

"What is it?"

"People tend to be happy when they see others who are unhappier than they are."

"Happy... Other people... Unhappy?" Marth asked himself as he continued his journey. A wicked smile stretched across his face as he began to scheme.

The wind whispered into his ears as Marth hid in the alleyways, awaiting his next victims. With an impatient sigh, he sat against the wall of a building and fidgeted with his unsheathed knife. Attempting a murder at night had its advantages and disadvantages. Of course, there were less eyes spying on his crimes. But the lack of eyes affected the number of possible preys. Due to his murders occurring most at night, people assumed that they were safe as long as they did not go outside after sunset.

"Damn it, there is no one here..." Marth cursed to himself.

At this point, Marth was willing to slay anyone, whether if the person was someone he knew or the person was a common, ordinary stranger. Ever since he committed his first murder in the junkyard, Marth enjoyed the sudden, hasty rush of adrenaline. It was an energetic, breathtaking feeling he hardly felt in his everyday life. Murder after murder, the feeling slowly began to function as a drug. Marth could not function in his life without it.

Finally losing his patience, Marth left his hiding spot and began to pace through the shadowy streets. Careful not to make a noise, he silently peered through every dark window, looking for any possible victims. Though, his luck was slowly running short. The apartments' windows were completely black, covering the hints or their inhabitants.

"Not this house..." Marth mumbled to himself after trying to peek into the last house at the corner. Its windows were completely covered by curtains. "Now, where should I go next...?"

The vroom of a zooming car zipped pass Marth. The violent gust roaring into his ears, Marth's hair blew over his face as he turned to look at the vehicle, which slowly halted in front of an apartment. The garage door slowly opened. The sound of metal squeaking screeched down the streets in harmony with the car's sputtering, groaning engine.

"Bingo."

Finished with her homework and ready for a new day, Daisy was sitting on her bed. She smiled sunnily as she browsed through her Smashbook account, satisfied that her selfie reached fifteen likes. Although she was an ordinary, twelve-year-old adolescent on the outside, she was a celebrity in school and on the internet. Popularity made her special. She felt like a totem pole; everyone could see her.

The sound of the garage door rumbling as it opened caught her attention. She shrugged as she listened to her mother's low, grumbling car drive into the garage, allowed by the door cranking shut.

The car's door slammed shut, which was mysteriously followed by a soft thud. Daisy paid no attention to the quiet sound. Mom must've gone to the grocery store for last minute shopping. She must've accidentally dropped something.

Downstairs, the door chillingly creaked open as a shadowy, dark, unrecognizable figure silently stepped into the kitchen. His footsteps made slow, cautious thumps on the flat floor. Looking around warily for presences of others, the figure steadily unsheathed his knife with cold, stiff hand, its blade strained with fresh blood. The air was stiff as ice, leaving a nerve-wrecking atmosphere in the room. The only sound that could be heard was an anxious, high-pitched ring.

There was no sign of anyone in the kitchen. His breath still, the figure peered into the dining room, which was just as empty as the kitchen. It was a bit strange, a middle-aged women living in this middle-class apartment by herself? From his observations, the apartment had two bedrooms. Someone else had to live here!

The figure turned into the living room, his cold, crystal-clear eyes silently looking at the empty sofas, underneath the antique table, and behind the television set and bookcases. Thinking that there was no one else in the house, the figure was about to exit the house when he noticed a staircase leading to the second story. At the top of the stairs was a door. It was slightly open, allowing think orange strings to flee the room. Not making a single, suspicious noise, the figure carefully began to head up the stairs. The stairs made slight creaking noises as it supported his weight.

"That's strange, Mom usually says, 'I'm home, Daisy!'. Maybe she's tired..." Daisy thought to herself, still calm and easygoing. *"Oh well..."*

The house suddenly became still as a doorknob. It was put into an enormous freezer, freezing any sounds into place. Her spine tingling in nervousness, Daisy looked up from her phone and looked around her room. Even though the presence of the artificial sun granted the space daytime, she did not feel safe. She sensed a dangerous figure lurking underneath her bed or desk waiting for the perfect time to strike.

"Why is it so quiet?" Daisy asked herself, lightly clutching her bedcovers.

After a few, unnerving moments, the sound of light yet unsettling footsteps ghostly rasped up the old, weary stairs. Daisy froze in her position, staying as still as a statue. Who was it?

"M-Mom?" she shakily asked, trying to look through the tiny creak of her door. "I-Is that you?"

Much to Daisy's discomfort, her question was not answered. Her eyes squinting, she noticed a dark figure lurking outside of her room for a few moments. In a blink of an eyes, it soundlessly vanished.

"M-Mom?" Daisy asked again. Wondering what the figure was, she got out of her bed and went to the door.

Daisy's fingers shook apprehensively as she gently pushed the door opened and peered around the pitch-black hallway. "Mom? Are you there? What are you doing?" She shakily asked again as she gathered her courage to step into the hallway and turn on the lights. Strangely, there was no one there.

Downstairs, the lights mysteriously flashed on, giving Daisy a small sense of relief. "Mom, what's happening?" she asked as she hurried down the stairs.

Again, nobody was there. Not even her loving mother was there to greet her. A bit worried and annoyed at the same time, Daisy went into the dining room. The lights were on, much to her confusion. If her mother was plotting a surprise, wouldn't it be wiser to leave the lights off? Seriously, what was she up to?"

"Mom, I'm tired of this, I—" Daisy immediately sliced her sentence off when her eyes caught tiny droplets of blood on the floor, in front of the door heading to the garage. Did Mother happened to hurt herself? If so, then why did she run to the garage? All of the Band-Aids were in the bathroom!

"The Band-Aids are in the bathroom M—" Daisy started, her sentence interrupted by her own startled gasp.

Lying in a puddle of fresh blood was her own mother. Completely startled, Daisy screamed in horror, and was about to race into the kitchen and dial 911 when she turned and met face-to-face with her mother's killer. The blue-haired, masked murderer was standing just a few feet away from her next to the light switch.

"Hello there, do you like the dark?" The Masked Slasher asked with a smirk, his blue mask shimmering in the light before he shut the lights.

"N-No!" Daisy shrieked in horror as she raced to the garage, which was the closest source of light. The Masked Slasher quickly trailed after her.

Garage were large storage rooms most houses and apartment had. They not only gave a place for a car or two to rest in, but useful items such as rakes, shovels, lawnmowers, and hammers. Through most of those items could be used as effective weapons, in a state of panic, humans probably could not think properly. When being chased by a dangerous, bloodthirsty killer, the main objective of the prey was to get as far as possible from the predator! Run! Just Run! Don't look back!

Daisy noticed that the garage door was barely opened. Knowing that the door room was blocked by the Masked Slasher, she hurried to the garage door and tried to squeeze through the narrow opening. Her head and chest easily made it through, however her bottom was a bit too large, much to her aghist.

"Oh, no! No! NOO!" Daisy shrieked panicky into the night, hoping that someone could hear her. She struggled to squeeze through the tight gap, sensing the Masked Slasher slowly coming closer to her. "Someone help me!"

The Masked Slasher was a few steps away from his latest victim. With his dagger in hand, he was about to finish Daisy off in his traditional, trademark technique. However, he suddenly changed his mind. With Daisy screaming deafeningly like that, it was bound to alert the neighbors. He needed to silence the alarm!

That was when the killer noticed a remote controller attached on the wall, next to the door. With a sadistic chuckle, he went towards the mechanical device and placed his right index finger on the largest button. His grin fell into a bitter glower.

"My name is not stupid." The Masked Slasher said before he pressed the button.

The garage's door short clanking noise was followed by a blood splattering crack.

A wailing police car rocketed past Marth as he unobtrusively walked down the street. His mask now held in his hands, he turned and watched the flashing blue and red vehicle make a sharp turn. Its alarming siren that blared down the streets was following by an ambulance's echoing blare. Remembering the scent of blood, his grin widened crazily as he looked at his mask.

Confusing, complicated emotions of joy swirled in Marth's head. Yes, he was happy that someone he disliked was gone from this world, but at the same time, he felt disappointed. He wanted to spend a little more with his victim before saying goodbye... Also, he felt weak. People were only anxious at the mention of the Masked Slasher, not completely terrified. They knew that in order to be out of his target range, they had to locked up in home during the night. The mysterious killer would not dare commit such a crime in the day, when everyone could identify him!

"I don't feel happy..." Marth murmured to himself.

"You tend to be happy when you see others who are unhappier than you are."

Shaking his head sadly, Marth walked down the neighborhood that was close to the public elementary school. He took a quick glance at the Hylians' apartment and paused. His mind slowly drifted into space as he remembered watching the two pointy-eared brothers happily walking back home from school and the repulsive feeling he got from it.

That was what struck him. He found a solution to his unhappiness.

Author's Notes: I vowed myself to sleep early... Totally worth it again...

Sorry for the late updates! It took me a while to get used to school assignments! I'm currently hoping that the pace of this story is right and the theme is (somewhat) obvious. I kinda got a small writer's block a few days ago, which somewhat contributed to this late update.

Story Questions:

The creative "What's going to happen next?" question.

Why do you think people are hypocrites?

Who do you think are Marth's next victims? (Death count: 8.)

Chapter 29: Chapter 29

A soft chime was what startled Roy awake. Rubbing the sandy drowsiness out of his heavy eyes, he sat up in the sleeping bag and took his phone off the bed stand. What time was it? Judging by the color of the light that shimmered into the room and his sixth sense, it could not be later than ten. Who could have sent him a text so early in the morning? It was likely that it was a wrong number.

Roy stood up from his spot and looked at Marth, who was still asleep like a ball of yarn. He made a tiny, weak sigh as he turned onto his left side. His closed eyelids slightly twitched, an indication that he was having an eerie, strange dream. Roy began to wonder what he was dreaming about. Fever dreams were centered on Ike. They could be perfectly normal and clear as glass, or erratic and unpredictable like rolling a dice.

Hoping not to wake him up, Roy's gently placed a cold hand on Marth's red forehead. To his relief, the bluenet only twitched his brows as his brain tried to make sense of the sudden touch, translating it into his dream. Through it was still warm, it was not as sizzling as it was last night. This relieved Roy, as it was a sigh that Marth was slowly recovering.

The phone in Roy's right hand chimed and buzzed again, making its owner turn its attention to it like a begging puppy. Who was sending him those texts?! Roy stood in front of the doorway as he unlocked his phone and skimmed through his messages.

"Hey Roy, you up?" The first message from Link asked. His second message stated, *"Ike, Toon, and I are outside your house."*

"Wtf?! Its 8! Why are you guys up?!" Roy texted back after glancing at the phone's clock.

" We want to see Marth! ;)"

"Hold on, im coming." Roy responded as he went to the window and peered through the window blinds. The driveway was empty, indicating that his parents left for work earlier. Careful not to wake Marth, Roy quickly yet silently ran down the stairs.

When he opened the door, he was greeted by the familiar faces of Link, Ike, and Toon. Though Link and Ike looked like they were ready for the day, Toon was still struggling to stay awake. The smaller Hylian yawned softly as he stretched. Much to Roy's surprise, Pit was nowhere to be seen. Maybe he was still sleeping. The angel was not a morning bird.

"Why are you guys here?!" Was Roy's stunned, loud exclamation.

"We want to see Marth before work." Ike answered as he walked into the house without another word.

"Can we see 'em?" Link asked with a polite smile. Toon just gawkily looked around.

Roy paused as he thought up of an answer, not noticing Ike walking up the stairs to the second floor. "I'm not sure... Marth is still sick. Also, he might be still asleep..."

"Not anymore!" Ike called down the stairs as he pulled Marth out of Roy's room. The bluenet was stumbling awkwardly, his socked feet slipping down the smooth, wood floor.

"Ike, what the heck?!" Roy shouted, his brows lowering in miff. "Did you drag him out of bed?! Also, when did you go upstairs?!"

"Well, he was getting up! I just want him to get out quicker!" Ike retorted.

"It's ok, Woy." Marth reassured as Ike released him from his grasp. "Ike didn't hurt me, I think..."

"Come in, Link and Toon." Roy said before yelling, "Marth, how are feeling?"

"...Kinda tired...?" Marth responded. "I don't feel as hot as before."

"Hey, is anyone hungry?" Link spoke up. "Toon and I hadn't eaten breakfast yet."

"I'm starved!" Ike responded, his loud voice thundering down the stairs. Marth jumped in surprise.

"Me neither." Roy answered. "Where do you guys want to eat?"

"Eat out?" Link scoffed. "I don't think so! I don't think Marth's stomach can handle 'em!"

"Yeah, that's a good point." Roy agreed. He felt a small nudge and looked down, making eye contact with Toon.

"Why don't we make somethin' here?" he suggested. "Do you have any ingredients we can use?"

Roy tried to recall some ingredients his father kept in the cupboards and the refrigerator. "Well, I think we have some pancake mix and bacon... Maybe some eggs, but there is not enough for all of us."

"We can make something out of it." Link reassured.

"Wait, can either of you guys cook?" Roy suddenly questioned. "I can't!"

There was a moment of silence. It was a question that froze the teens into a train of thought. That was a good question? Who could actually cook? It would be a shame if their cuisine became a one-way ticket to the hospital.

"Don't look at me!" Ike stated, trying not to make eye contact with his friends. "I can only make cup noodles, ok?"

"I don't know how to cook..." Toon just said, before his eyes lit out. "Hey Link, don't you cook?"

Link laughed, scratching the back of his head in embarrassment. "I only help Dad! I don't actually cook!"

"Yeah you can! Just try!" Toon encouraged.

"Er, I can pull out a cookbook and try to follow the instructions." Link suggested. "C'mon, let's go!"

As the three went into the kitchen, Marth was about to carefully walk down the stairs when he was stopped by Ike. "Hey Marth, I have something to ask." He nonchalantly asked. Marth paused and looked back at Ike with large, curious eyes. Ike's brows were lowered, his expression stern and troubled.

"Y-Yes, what is it, Ike?" Marth responded.

"What happened to you yesterday?" Ike asked, his concerned tone mixed with a pinch of worry. "First thing I knew, you were all right. The next thing I knew, you suddenly disappeared and now you're home sick with a darn fever!" Ike's brash voice rose like his blood pressure along with his anxiety.

"Why are you asking?" Marth softly asked, a bit nervous and confused.

Ike internally sighed at himself. Don't be so hard on Marth! He was ill! Of course he would not understand what he was questioning! He could not properly think straight! His drawn lines were scribbles on a blank piece of paper. "Look, last night Roy only told me that he and his dad found you! He didn't give me the details. What happened yesterday? Why didn't you go to work?"

Marth trembled in fear as he remembered yesterday's traumatizing events. "I was going to work but then..." He paused. Did he really need to tell Ike what happened to him? He did not want to think about it! Thinking about a horrible experience results in the unintentional habitat of remembering the dreadful moment!

"...But then? Go on." Ike urged edgily.

"Well... I thought I saw someone I knew so I followed her into an alleyway, but it turned out it wasn't her!" Marth continued, clutching both of his hands. "I tried to leave, but some strangers came, grabbed me, and threw me into a van."

"Did you even try to fight back? Were they armed?"

"I tried to fight back, but there were too much of them." Marth sniveled uneasily. "They tied me up and put a cloth in my mouth... I think they had weapons..." Marth paused for a few moments. The quick yet shocking incident only felt like a few seconds in the present. It was difficult for him to recall details. "Then they took me to this scary place."

"Do you know where they took you?"

Marth shook harder. Ike's questions were slowly crawling up his spine, wrecking his nervous system. "I don't know... It was this building on an island close to Smashburg."

Ike gasped, his cobalt eyes widening in horror and disgust. His boiling head was beginning to complete the pieces of a puzzle depicting the infamous asylum in the middle of the wide, blue bay. *"Why?!"* he thought to himself, his face slightly turning white. *"Why did that stupid asylum kidnap Marth?! There's nothing damn wrong with him!"*

"Ike? What's wrong?" Marth asked when he noticed Ike's startled expression. "Did I say something bad?"

"Oh, nothing!" Ike immediately responded, trying to reassure the smaller bluenet with a shaky smile. "So, I guess that you broke out or something like that, right?"

"Y-Yeah." Marth's heart began to beat wildly. Although he was safe in home, remembering a terrifying experience often distorts the brain, who assumed that such a memory was actually occurring at the moment. Wanting to end the conversation, Marth shyly smiled at Ike. "Thank you for asking, Ike. It makes me feel better!"

Without another word, Marth quickly turned and was about to head into Roy's room when Ike suddenly grabbed him by the shoulders. "Hey, wait!" Ike exclaimed, his voice rising with his impatience as he accidentally slammed Marth into the wall, his grip tightening. Marth softly whimpered nervously. Did he anger Ike? "I have one more question to ask!"

"Y-Yeah! W-What is it?!" Marth stammered uncomfortably.

"What did these people do to you? Did they hit you?" Marth's eyes widened at Ike's low, furious question. The indigo-haired male's voice had a tone that could make even the most notorious gangs of the city run back to their mommies. Utterly alarmed, Marth's mouth refused to utter a small answer.

Not getting a response from Marth, Ike realized the agonizing grip he had on Marth's thin, weaker shoulder and the intimidating position he placed himself in. "Shit...!" he muttered as he immediately released Marth and backed away, giving more room for the smaller male. Marth slowly collapsed onto the floor, his back scrapping against the wall. His azure bangs covered his watery, large, cerulean spheres.

"...Marth?" Ike spoke up. Oh no, if he injured Marth either mentally, physically, or both, his friends would never forgive him!

"...Yes they did." Marth mumbled softly, his voice shaky and fearful.

"Say that again." Ike demanded, trying to sound gentler.

"They hit me! They hit me!" Marth exclaimed, before covering his mouth tightly with his hands. He bit his lips as he tried to hold in his muddying tears.

"Those assholes..." Ike's cobalt eyes narrowed, his hawk eyes lividly glaring at the ground. *"If only I can get my hands on them!"*

A weak sniffle was what caused Ike to soften his fuming glower and avert his eyes to Marth. "Damn it, I'm sorry Marth!" he quietly said, trying to soothe and calm the skinnier azure-haired male. "I didn't know what I was doing! I was just so angry!"

Marth made his way into Ike's arm and wrapped his arms around him in a forgiving embrace. "It's ok, Ike." He comforted, snuggling closer to the larger male for coziness.

Ike instantly felt the abrupt blast of warmth absorbed by his senses. "Dang, Marth! You're hot!" he remarked as he placed his large hand on Marth's pink, scorching forehead. "I'm stupid for dragging you out of bed like that!"

"I'm not that sick..." Marth protested. He squealed in surprise when Ike suddenly scooped him with his powerful arms and began to carry him into Roy's room. "Iiiiiike!" he cried out, trying to free himself from the other male's stronger grasp. "I can walk by myself! Also, I wanna help Woy and the others cook!" he whined childishly.

Ike grinned to himself. Marth was back to his childish self. "Nope! Stay in bed! If you suddenly fainted fell head-first into the stove, sink, or something like that, I don't know what to say to Roy's mom and dad!"

Marth was about to retort back when Ike lightly dropped him into Roy's bed. With an "Oof!" he gazed up at Ike who covered him in his soft, snuggly blanket.

"Stay in here until breakfast is ready, you got that?" Ike ordered.

"Y-Yeah!" Marth replied, mildly grasping the covers. As he watched Ike leave, a question unexpectedly popped up into his mind. "Ike, I have a question."

"What is it?" Ike turned to face the bluenet, who laid his head on the pillow and snuggled in his covers. "Do you need something?"

"No. I just want to ask if I deserve to go to the insane asylum." Marth stated.

"What? Say that again." Ike said, thinking that he misheard.

"Do you think I deserve to go to the insane asylum?" Marth's soft, cheery expression was erased with an invisible eraser. A pencil drew a firm, troubled expression on his blank face.

"No... Not to me anyway!" Ike answered, scratching the back of his head. That question came out of the blue. "Look, you don't need to worry! You don't have any mental disorders like me! Why did you ask that?"

"...I don't know to be honest." Marth answered, blushing madly in embarrassment. "I'm sorry..."

"Don't be sorry!" Ike responded. "Well, I'll wake you up when we finished making breakfast!" he said before he left.

Now alone, Marth pulled the warm covers closer to his boiling body. At that moment, he felt his bare head and realized that Elice's tiara was missing from its original position. A surge of panic bustling through his veins, Marth immediately looked at the bed stand and sighed loudly in relief. The fake toy tiara was sitting beneath the small lamp, waiting for its owner to pick it up and proudly wear it on his head.

Calming down, Marth clumsily reached for the tiara and placed it on his head. As he nestled back into his original position, he suddenly got the impression that he had seen the tiara before. When he meant "before", he did not meant from the day he met Elice. He meant that he saw the tiara at a moment of time that was stripped from his memories.

"Damn it, more murders!" Marth did not flinch a bit when he father abruptly slammed his newspaper onto the table. He peered up and looked at his father, whose facial expression was mixed with disgust and horror.

"What happened this time?" Liza asked, tapping her fingers anxiously on the breakfast table. She immediately regretted asking the question, as she did not want to picture the unfortunate victims' gruesome deaths.

"The first one, a single mother, was found stabbed to death in the garage along with her daughter who was crushed by the garage door!" Cornelius explained. "So terrifying... The daughter goes to Marth's school! Why in the world is everyone in that school getting killed?"

Marth softly scoffed to himself. He knew the reason why.

"And the police still haven't found a suspect?" Elice asked, her voice rising in disbelief. "This is unbelievable! The Masked Slasher must be very intelligent!"

"...What if he has intelligence above average?" Marth spoke up innocently, his eyes wide in horror. "Nothing could stop him!"

"Impossible." Cornelius scorned. "Intelligent people normally won't waste their time on murdering people."

The phone in the kitchen suddenly blared, its electronic tone bleeping a catchy tune. In response, the entire Lowell family silenced and awaited the message. Cornelius quickly got out of his seat and stood by the phone, preparing to pick it up. Unlike his mother and Elice, who were anxiously staring at the phone, Marth just continued to finish his breakfast. It must be a wrong number.

"Hello Smashville Prep Academy families! Due to this week's recent incidents, school is temporarily closed until further incidents are resolved. Thank you."

As soon as the message finished with an electrical, piercing beep, Cornelius instantly erased it. "Marth, it looks like school is currently canceled for you." He told his son, who looked back with stunned, large eyes. "Due to your fellow classmates getting attacked and killed, I guess the school wised up and decided to close it."

"...What?" Marth quietly gasped in astonishment. "R-Really? It's that bad?!"

"Of course it's bad!" Cornelius retorted straightforwardly. "The majority of the Masked Slasher's victims came from your school!"

"It's so terrible. I just want to study in that school and this is happening!" Marth sighed in frustration. "I just want to— !"

A second phone call was what interrupted Marth's grumble, its catchy tune slicing his sentence in half. Cornelius and Liza could only look at each other. A second phone call? What was happening? They normally did not get a lot of phone calls unless if it is acting related.

"Hello Smashburg Private Institute for Graduates families!" the voicemail greeted calmly. *"Due to incidents happen in Smashburg, class is temporarily canceled until further notice. Sorry for the inconvenience."* An earsplitting beep was

followed as Cornelius erased the latest memo. The message's composed tone greatly confused Marth. How did these people sound so calm while talking about such violent incidents?

"So, it's really that bad..." Cornelius spoke as he went back to the table and sat down.

"I don't feel safe anymore." Liza commented. Her daughter nodded in agreement while her son only looked down. "Honey, what should we do? What if the Masked Slasher gets one of us?"

"Stay calm." Cornelius only ordered. "We just need to be careful and aware of our surroundings."

"Six people are already dead and you're telling me to stay calm?" Liza asked in cynicism. "I don't want Elice and Marth to get hurt and killed!"

Cornelius abruptly slammed his iron-hard fist onto the table, knocking over his cup of coffee. "I am sure that we just need to be careful! I am willing to bet that the victims were not even paying attention before they got murdered!"

Silencing immediately, Liza submissively looked away and sipped her tea with a tired, upset sigh.

Marth got up from his seat. "I'm full." He said as he walked out of the kitchen.

"Where are you going?" Cornelius asked, his voice stern.

"Upstairs to my room. I need to study." Marth answered, looking at his father trustfully. "If school is closed for now, I must take advantage of the time I have." He added. "If I learn the material beforehand, I can get better grades!"

Marth softly smiled before he left the kitchen. His innocent smile slowly mutated into a sinister grin with each step on the staircase. He was satisfied for once, as not only that imprudent academy was closed, he have most of his time to himself. All of this happened due to the elimination of a few filthy people.

Though, Marth was not content yet. There were still so many dust and cinder he needed to sweep away and dump into the trash. The main problem was, the majority of them were clouded on or under heavy furniture. It would be hard to move them out of the way without getting his hands dirty.

His weight making the hallway floor rasp in pain, Marth entered his father's office. It was intimidating to most people. Its furniture, including its desk, bookcase, and even the rug were ancient, valuable antiques. It greatly expressed the wealth of the Lowell Family, and their fruitless efforts to achieve happiness.

Through, Marth was sure he was going to be the first member to be happy for once. Careful to not move a single object, as his father paid attention to little details, he quietly opened one of the drawers. Buried under a pile of dusty papers was a gun, one of the most lethal things in Earth. Marth cautiously took it out and silently closed the drawer, making as little noise as possible.

As he walked down the streets of Smashburg, Marth remarked how foolish and gullible people were. Before he snuck out of his house, Marth skillfully locked the door, making his family assuming he was studying. Such fools... People hardly enjoyed studying subjects they disliked. Despite the murders, he saw teenagers scrolling down the streets towards downtown Smashburg where the wharf was. The schools purposely closed down to protect their students from further harm, which ironically resulted in their students risking their lives to hang out with their friends. Children, especially teenagers, were ignorant fools. They believed that they were immortal to harm and tragedy.

Through, it was reasonable. There were no murders that occurred in the daytime. As Marth noticed, there were almost no people out after sunset.

Until now.

Marth reached into his coat's pocket and felt the gun in his hand as he recognized the elementary school. Like a lightbulb, it was off. It was completely silent like a ghost town. Marth then looked across the street and recognizable one of the apartment buildings; the building where the Hylian family lived. This was it. At this moment, Marth knew he was going to commit the ultimate sin, which will skyrocket Smashburg's fear of the mysterious, unnamed Masked Slasher. All he needed to do was make a turn, cross the street, and find a way to break into that home.

Smiling manically in the inside, Marth approached the corner and was about to turn when suddenly—

"BUMP!"

An unrecognizable blur of colors violently slammed into Marth, knocking him down onto the cold, hard sidewalk. With a grumble, Marth shakily got up and angrily glared at the source of the impact.

"I will show whoever got in my damn— !" Marth immediately froze as his angry cerulean eyes came across startled, large navy blue eyes.

Sitting on the ground clumsily was the little cardinal-haired boy with the drawing in his hand.

Author's Notes: I'm so going to regret staying up late tomorrow.

Sorry for the sorta-late update! I had a small case of writer's block, but luckily I kinda manged to cure it! Just to let you guys know, I'm beginning to upload this story on my dA account. (See profile for link if you're curious.) If you did read the first chapter, you will notice that it's different. That is because I'm in the process of editting errors and parts, so it would match my future fan comic! I will upload the rewritten chapters as soon as all of them are finished!

(I'm not going to ask questions because I want to see how many reviews I can get without those quesitons.)

Chapter 30: Chapter 30

Marth could only blankly look at the little redhead. What should he do? Should he help him up? Leave? Shoot him with the gun? That would make the Masked Slasher himself notorious. But, there was something different about the boy. Unlike the people he murdered, he did not mar his life, other than just bumping into him. His unintentional act was just a tiny scratched compared to his enemies' broken bones and stab wounds in the heart.

"I'm so sowwy!" the redhead apologized as he got up and brushed the dirt off his jeans. "I didn't see you!"

"It's fine." Marth smiled softly before it fell into a stern glare. "What are you doing here by yourself? Are your parents nearby?"

"No, Mom and Dad aren't hewe." the little boy answered, fidgeting the paper with his fingers. "They didn't wanna take me to shcool. Sho, I snuck out. I wanna pway on the pwaygwound!"

"Don't you know that there is a serial killer running loose in the streets?" Marth strictly questioned. "He could kill you!"

The redhead scoffed, sounding a bit too cocky for his age. "I'ww just be caweful!" he replied. "Dat's what Mom and Dad tell me!"

Marth suddenly grabbed the redhead's smaller left hand. "Wah! What are you doing?!" the redhead asked with large, surprised eyes.

"I'm taking you back to your parents." Marth bluntly said, looking back at the smaller boy with cold eyes.

"No, I don't wanna!" The redhead stubbornly exclaimed, trying to break free from Marth's stronger grasp. "I wanna go to the pwaygwound!"

"I don't want to learn later that you got viciously killed in broad daylight." Marth retorted rudely. "I don't want to have regrets!"

Marth's heartless yet truthful statement was not enough to bring the redhead's determination down. "If you're worwied about me being alone, den why are you alone?" he stubbornly argued back.

That made Marth halt in his tracks. With large cerulean orbs, he looked back at the little red-haired boy in astonishment. He was right. He did have a point!

"...I can take care of myself." Marth could only say back.

"Wait, where's your mom and dad?" the redhead asked softly.

"They're busy with something else." Marth straightforwardly answered. "Please understand that people just don't have the time or don't want to care for you."

The redhead did not reply. Being a little kid, he had trouble understanding these kinds of relationships.

"Follow me." Marth ordered. "I'll walk around and look for your parents. When I find them, I'll just leave you with them and go back."

"But, dat means you'wl be alone!" the redhead added, clutching Marth's bigger hand harder. "I don't want you to get hurt!"

"Then what do you want me to do?" Marth argued back. "Take you to the park and worry your parents to death?!"

"Well, we can pway there for a few minutes... It won't be wong! Dad won't mind!"

"If you say so..." Marth mumbled, rolling his eyes in bother.

Although he kept a calm expression on his face, Marth was inwardly pouting in frustration. Great, he was now stuck with a little boy like duct tape! He had better things to do than playing on a playground with someone he hardly knew! Marth kept his head straight ahead, trying not to make eye contact with the little redheaded boy. He was not in the mood for words. All he wanted to do was get this tedious act over with!

"So, what's your name?" the redhead asked curiously, tugging on Marth's larger hand. "My name is Woy!"

Marth scoffed emotionlessly. "'Woy'? Is that your actual name? Your parents must be quite creative." he remarked rudely.

"Not Woy, Woy!" the red-haired male repeated with an annoyed huff, his face flushing in anger.

"Wait, you mean Roy, right?" Marth asked to confirm. He forgot that little children tended to mispronounce words.

"Yes, Woy is my name!" Roy beamed in triumph. "Well, Dad told me dat they were gonna name me Elwoy after a family name, but it didn't fit me."

"I like Roy better." Marth forced a soft smile at the innocent, smaller male.

The two finally got to the elementary school. With them being the only visitors, Marth found it a bit awkward. Hearing the cars zoom by behind him, he assumed that the drivers thought that he and Roy was not notified of the cancelation of school. It seemed a bit embarrassing, as most people tend to jump to the conclusion that the two kids were either rash, or their parents did not tend to them at all. (Not Roy's of course!)

Marth approached the gate to the play area, which was sealed shut with a chain-linked lock. He tried to open a gate to make a narrow opening in which he and Roy could squeeze through. Unfortunately, the chains wrapped around the gates were quite tight and short.

"It's locked?" Roy sadly asked, his large navy-blue orbs glimmering with disappointment.

Marth felt his feelings lunch him in the stomach when he saw Roy's hurt, puppy eyes. "No, it isn't. I got this!"

His fingers fumbled in his jean pocket as Marth took out a small hairpin. He slipped the tiny hair accessory into the lock and turned it, hoping that it was dense enough to work. Much to his surprise, after jutting the pin around for a few moments, the lock cracked open with a snap. It fell onto the ground with a clunk, followed by a stream of chains.

Roy was amazed. "Wow! How did you do dat?"

"With magic." Marth answered as he and Roy entered the school playground.

Roy's naive, pale face flushed pink in excitement. "Weally? Magic is weal?"

Marth laughed at the redhead's naivety. "No, magic isn't real! I was joking!"

Roy only looked down in disappointment, before his smile widened at a new thought. "If magic is weal, what would you do?"

"Eliminate all of my enemies." Marth responded, not knowing how icy and merciless he sounded. "They do not preserve to be near my presence."

Roy did not like the dark tone of Marth's answer. "Why don't you be fwiends with dem?"

"They can never change their ways." Marth said solemnly. "Once when they take the poison, it's too late for them."

"Wewe dey bullies?"

"I know five bullies who deserve my wrath."

"Why don't you try to be fwiends with them?" Roy asked again.

"Sometimes, it's not worth trying to fit their pathetic expectations." Marth explained. He remembered sitting in the school cafeteria alone among the sea of cliques. "No matter what you do, they will always see you below them."

"You don't have fwiends, do you?" Roy quietly asked, feeling sorry for the bluenet.

"I am quite lonely for my age." Marth answered. "Though, independence does build character."

"If you're lonely, then can I be your friend?" Roy suddenly asked with a hopeful tone that sang in his voice.

Marth paused. He was a bit astonished. A little cheery boy was willing to spend time with a grump like him?

"What would be the benefits?" Marth asked. "Do you know that we are in different age groups? Sooner or later, we will be separated by our own fates! Our memories of each other will eventually fade into oblivion!"

"Dat's not true!" Roy protested, giving Marth a look that was quite stern and intimidating for his age. His expression slowly softened. "I see you walk back home every day after school! We can at least play together for a few minutes!"

"What?" Marth mentally asked himself. This boy noticed him all along?

Why did Roy notice him? Was it because he was the only child who was constantly alone? Or was it something else?

"Why did you notice me?" Marth asked as he approached a bunch adjacent to the playground and sat down.

Roy plopped down next to him. "It's because you have blue hair! Some of my fwiends have blue hair, but yours stand out the most!"

Marth brushed his bangs out of his face and intensely rolled his eyes. The hue of his hair reminded him of his strict heritage of acting, fame, and unhappiness. He was more than willing to shave it off or dye it another color.

"Honestly, I want to dye it another color." Marth stated. "I'm sick of this color. I wish I can get rid of it!"

"NOO! I like it!" Roy protested, clutching his tiny fists.

Marth sighed, making Roy shush for a few moments. The two sat in the bench together in silence for a few moments. Bored, Roy found himself kicking and fidgeting with his fingers. He found relaxation a bit dull, as he preferred activities. Marth on the other hand embraced the tranquility. It was nice to escape from his strict lifestyle once in a while. No fists slamming in his lithe body, no furious words putting him down like paper, and no disappointment in himself. Everything was peaceful to Marth for a few moments.

Though, Roy crawling around the bench was slowly snapping Marth out of his tranquility.

"If you don't want to sit with me, then go play on the playset!" Marth suggested with a hint of irritation.

"I don't wanna pway by myself! I wanna play with you!" Roy defiantly stated.

Marth decided to give in. It was futile to argue with the redhead, whose willpower greatly resembled his father's. "Fine, fine. What should we do?"

"Play on the playground!" Roy answered.

"No games?" Marth asked.

"Nope! No games!" Roy answered before racing to the slides laughing.

Marth smiled slightly as he approached the swings. It was a bit strange for him. Children of his social status and age were expected to outgrow little, childish stuffs. However, it provided some comfort for Marth. As he sat down on the swing and began to push himself, he began to remember the innocent days he once had before everything fell apart like glass.

With each swing, Marth remembered moments of his childhood that added up to his hopeless, miserable present.

Not winning the school talent show.

Swing.

Failing to get a small part in a movie.

Swing.

Overshadowed by his relative's achievements.

Swing.

His father and mother's marred marriage.

Swing.

His sister Elice giving more of her attention to her boyfriend.

Swing.

Being forcefully squeezed into a mental mold at his private school.

Swing.

"What's wong?" Roy asked, approaching Marth by the side to avoid getting kicked in the face. "You look so sad..."

Marth's eyes flickered in surprise. He was so lost in his thoughts, he did not recognize the frown that etched across his blue face.

"Nothing, I was just thinking about something." Marth said, hoping that Roy was not interested in his thoughts.

"Well, if you're sad, then why don't you try to jump off the swing? You'll be more happier!" Roy suggested.

"Right now?"

"No, higher!"

Marth bit his lips to brace himself as he swung higher and higher into the air. His shaky hands clutched the swing's chains tightly. If he twisted an ankle or broke a wrist, how could he explain the accident to his parents?!

"Higher... Higher... There!" Roy exclaimed when Marth reached the highest point. "Jump off now!"

"Are you crazy?!" Marth asked in disbelief. "I could break something from this height!"

"I did it before and I'm fine! Do it!" Roy encouraged.

Marth closed his eyes as he prepared to jump.

"Here goes nothing!" he said to himself as he leapt off the seat in midair.

The next thing Marth knew was he clumsily landed on the sandy ground with a loud thud. Shakily getting up, he carefully moved his limps for any signs of injury. Roy watched him, covering his mouth in awe.

"Legs are fine, arms are fine, head is fine, everything is fine." Marth checked,

"...That was awesome!" Roy blurted out, excitedly rushing towards Marth.

Marth raised an eyebrow. "Why? I just jumped off a swing!"

"But, you jump off the swing the highest!" Roy added. "You were like a Golurk! Boom! You took off like a rocket!"

Marth suddenly covered his mouth.

"Are you ok?" Roy asked worriedly.

Unable to hold it in, Marth finally released it. For the first time in years, he began to laugh joyfully. A chain reaction occurred when Roy began to giggle along with the bluenet. Yes, Marth dreaded the sound he made when he chortled and his stomach ached a bit from exhaustion, but he did not care! He was happy! Happy for once!

After a few moments, the two boys stopped laughing and tried to catch their breath. Their stomachs turned uncomfortable as air gushed in and out of the large organ. They felt a bit light-headed, as most of their oxygen was expelled along with their laughter.

"Let's do that again!" Marth said to Roy with a twinkle in his eyes.

"I'll go! I'll go!" Roy excitedly said as he scurried to the swings.

Marth smiled as he brushed the sand off his pants. His heart beating in joy, he was about to take the second swing next to Roy when—

"Roooooooy!" an adult man's voice suddenly boomed down the playground, freezing the two boys in their path.

"Hm? Who's here?" Marth asked, glancing around cautiously for the source of the voice.

"Oh, it's Dad!" Roy gasped, rushing out into the open yard. "Daaaad! I'm hewe!" he called.

Marth looked at the school gates and spotted a man identical to Roy hurrying down the yard towards them. Roy was a carbon copy of his father. The two shared the same colored eyes, hair, and build. Of course, the two were different in personality and age. While Roy seemed merry and unaware of the danger he put himself in, his father was panicked and relieved at the same time.

"Roy! Thank the gods that you're ok!" Eliwood said as he wrapped his arms around the smaller redhead and tightly hugged him. "Are you hurt? Scared?"

"No, I'm ok, Dad!" Roy answered happily.

"Never do that again, understand?" Eliwood's anxious expression turned into a stern glower. "It's not safe in Smashburg now! Anything could happen to a lonely eight-year-old child like you!"

"But Dad, I wasn't alone!" Roy said. "I was with a blue-haired boy!"

"I don't see him." Eliwood said. "You must be imagining things."

"Huh?" Roy looked behind and noticed that Marth was gone. "Where did he go? Aw... I didn't even ask for his name..."

Covering his ears, Marth hurried to the back of the school. He scurried over the fence like a ninja and hoped down onto the sidewalk, hoping that he didn't draw attention to himself. Mush to his relief, no one was present. With a shaky huff, Marth collapsed onto his knees as he caught his breath.

"I mustn't give in..." Marth thought to himself with each pant.

To Marth, his experience with Roy was a risky close call. He nearly placed the sugary piece of chocolate in his mouth. It was a close call, as when he bit into it, he recognized the flavor and managed to split the treat out. But, the taste still lingered in his mouth. His body desired the joyful feeling. For the first time in years, Marth did not feel lonely. He felt accepted despite the way he was. Marth was tempted to hurry to the front of the school and tell Roy his name before the two parted ways.

However, Marth was stubborn. He refused to make eye contact with the redhead again. The happiness he just experienced was an illusion! It was a fraud! These kinds of happiness were the ones that gave one a false sense of hope. It was like reaching for a hand for help, only to have the hand shove you back onto the dirt! When one least expects it, reality sets in, making their fall much painful.

Unless if one changes reality before it has the chance to strike. Marth felt the gun in his pocket, which was hidden all along. Remembering his quest, Marth began to head towards the apartments again.

This time, reality would be against other people, not him.

Author's Notes: I'm currently hoping that these late updates don't make people loose interest in the story...

Sorry for the late update! I got carried away schoolwork again! I know that this chapter is kinda short, but I don't want to make the story too preditable. I'm still trying to edit the chapters while being consistent with updates. Chapter one and two are rewritten and now updated, so I suggest skimming through them if you want a better understanding of the story.

(Still no story questions. I'm trying to determine whether story questions give me better reviews or not.)

Chapter 31: Chapter 31

Author's Notes: Trigger warning! Read at your risk!

Being a Hylian had its advantages and disadvantages. Of course, Link was looked down by humans since he was a minor in Smashburg. However, with the warm explanations of his parents, he eventually learned that they were just jealous of him. They envied his ability to hear with his sensitive, pointy ears.

Those pointy ears helped him in his quest to the game arcade, which could have been easier if school had not been canceled. Concerned of the safety of their sons, their parents prohibited them from setting a single foot out of the house. It was reasonable. A parent's worst nightmare was to have their child die before them. It was considered to be unnatural. The old must die before the young.

Even though Link was ten and a bit mature for his age, that did not mean he was naive and stubborn. His parents promised that he and Toon could go to the arcade today! He understood that there was a serial killer haunting the streets in Smashburg. However, the Masked Slasher only struck at night! Link peered out of his bedroom window and saw a large group of teenagers hustle by carelessly. Besides, he and Toon were not in the target of danger. There were people out in public!

"Wink? Did you dink of someding?" Toon asked. The smaller Hylian was lying on Link's bed. His cat-like, aquamarine eyes were gray with boredom.

"I'm trying." Link replied before he looked out of the doorway. Downstairs, he spotted his father sitting on the couch reading the newspaper, which was close to the front door. Link sighed in frustration. His parents were really on guard.

"Why don't we twy to climb out the window?" Toon suggested with bright eyes.

Link peered out of the window and peered at the concrete ground. Though it was only twenty feet deep, it was a grand pit filled with verminous snakes and lava to Link. He did not want to just jump down, knowing that his legs were going to crack and shatter into pieces at the sudden impact. His tiny body could not take the fall.

"We can't just jump off, Toon." Link explained, running a hand through his dirty blond hair. "We will get hurt."

"Awww..." Toon pouted and huffed in frustration.

Link shook his head sadly. He did not want to disappoint his little brother. His ears twitching in annoyance, the older Hylian flopped onto his bed next to his sibling and tried to think of an idea.

He could try to convince his parents!

Scratch that, his parents were as stubborn as a goat. They would not move out of the way no matter what!

What about sneaking out of the back kitchen door?

Link tilted his pointy ears and heard the sound of the stove rumbling and bowls clanging. No, it would not work, as his mother was currently occupying the kitchen, cooking dinner.

Maybe they could sneak downstairs and climb out of a window!

That was definitely not going to work. First of all, his father was downstairs in the family room. Second, being wiser than their children, their parents were going to suspect something if the window was left open for their return!

Touching the sensitive tip of his elven ears, Link huffed softly. Of course, he did appreciate his heritage. His pointy ears blessed with sensitive, sharper hearing that allowed him to find his friends easily in a game of hide and seek, and hearing notes for certain songs. However, because he inherited his trait from his parents, it meant that both of them had the same sharp sense. Link remembered the time he tried to steal some cookies from the large, clay jar that sat atop the fridge, only to get caught red-handed by his mother, who heard him enter the kitchen. If he was a human, he would have gotten away with it!

Out of all the ideas he and Toon came up with, Toon's idea was the best. Their parents would not catch them sneaking out! Of course, they could learn that their two sons escaped upon arriving at the scene, which included the open window and disappearance of their kids, but Link did not want to over think it. His could always take the consequences off his little brother's shoulders. But, how were they going to get down?

"Wink? Do we have a rope?" Toon suddenly asked.

"I think so. Why do you ask?" Link replied, looking back at his brother.

"Maybe we can use it to cwimb down!" Toon suggested with a bubbly smile.

Link got off his bed and went to his closet. "Hold on, let me look for it." Coughing as he shoved some dusty, abandoned, old toys out of his way, Link dug into his junk in search of the fabled, desired jump rope.

"I found it!" Link said as he pulled out a long jump rope. The squirming dust wiggled into his nose, causing him to sneeze and cough.

"Gweat! Let's see how wong it is!" Toon replied.

Approaching the window, Link carefully dangled the rope out and slowly lowered it, trying not to let it tap against the wall. His father, who was seated directly below their room, could hear the noise and suspect his sons' rambunctious plot. As Link carefully hoisted the rope down, Toon went to the door and quietly closed it, not before hanging a "do not disturb" sign on the door handle.

"Hey Toon?" Link spoke in ambushed, whispering voice.

"Yeah?" Toon replied, locking the door.

"It's long enough! It can work!" Link responded with an encouraging nod as he tied the rope to his bed's headboard.

"Yay!" Toon cheered as he scurried to the window. He instantly covered his mouth to muffle his cry of joy.

Link bit his lip to halt his laughter. His brother looked so silly...

"Oh yeah, Wink! I locked the door so Mommy and Daddy won't find out we snuck out!" Toon added.

Link made a doubtful expression. He slanted his lip and lightly bit it. "I think that will make them suspicious..."

"But I put a 'do not disturb sign' on it!" Toon pouted. "They will think we are sweepng!"

"Er... That will work." Link replied with a reassuring nod. He did not want to discourage his brother's idea. Link carefully stepped out of the window, holding the rope tightly. "I'll climb down first. So if you happen to app, I'll be there to catch you."

"Ok!" Toon watched his older brother silently climb out of his window.

Once when Link was at the bottom, in the alleyway, he gave Toon a wave; a gesture telling him to follow him. Link's cautious senses perked up as he watched Toon's stubby, short legs step out of the window. His reflexes were prepared to drop his brother's fall if he happened to slip. Much to his relief, Toon managed to get down safely.

"Stay quiet." Link whispered, putting his index finger in front of his lips. "Shh..."

Toon took Link's larger, left hand and did the same gesture. "Sshhh..." he softly replied.

With a gentle smile, Link led Toon out of the alleyway. After looking around the streets for any signs of danger (like their parents"), the two began to walk down the streets. To them, it was a carefree, sunny day. The bright sunlight was a barrier from the gloomy, ominous night, a realm where the Masked Slasher lurked. He attempted to slip in thought the shadowy alleyways, yet they were completely illuminated by the light. People could see him much clearer! Link smiled calmly to himself. Why were his parents so worried and protective of him and Toon?

"It's so bright..." Toon commented, squinting his teal eyes. "But, warm! Why did Mommy and Daddy want to keep us inside?"

"I do not know." Link shrugged his arms.

Unbeknownst to the two Hylian children, a certain, blue, masked figure was watching them the entire time. Without a single word, he silently dashed into the alleyway close to their apartment. Link's nosy ears caught the source of the running, stealthy footsteps, however he ignored it. He assumed that it came from a jogger taking advantage of the clear day.

"Did you bring the quarters?" Toon asked.

"Yep, they are in here!" Link patted his jeans' left pocket.

"That's good! What game are you going to play? I'm going to play Pac-Man!"

Link thought for a while. "I'm not sure... They are hundreds of games to play there!"

"How far is the game awcade?" Toon asked another question. "How wong will it take us to get there?"

Link smiled to himself. Little children had short patience. "It's not that far. It's just a few blocks away! We should be there in about ten minutes!"

"Just in time for dinner?"

"Just in time!"

Link and Toon went to the corner of a bustling street. The stoplight across the street was a blaring red, ordering the boys to wait until it turned into a friendly, tranquil green. Though, that did not mean that it stopped any one from crossing the busy street and getting hit by a speeding car. As Link protectively held Toon's tiny right hand and patiently waited for the light to turn green, Toon hastily banged on the large, protruding, silver button on the lights. Was it not a button? Buttons were supposed to make things go!

"That's not going to work." Link chuckled.

"Yeah, it wiw!" Toon pouted funnily. "I'ww show you!"

"Toon, don't worry! We have all day!" Link said, trying to calm the little Hylian.

"But, I don't want Mommy and Daddy to get mad at me!"

"If Mom and Dad find out we snuck out, I'll take responsibly." Link stated.

"But, I don't want you to get into twouble!"

Link opened his mouth. "Well, I—"

There was a thundering bang.

Both Link and Toon's ears perked up at the noise. What was what? Where did it come from? To Toon, whose mind was raw like a baby fruit and whose ears were not fully developed, it sounded like one of those playful firecrackers used in celebrations. Wow! Was it someone's birthday? No, it could not be... Toon knew all of his neighbors. His youthful memory slowly recalled that it was no one's birthday today.

Link's view was a different story. His face turning white as paper, he began to deny the source of the sound. Trying to stay calm, he began to twitch his ears in different directions, checking to see if he identified the sound right. No, it could not be! His family lived in one of the safest neighborhoods in Smashburg! Of course, there were a few people who despised them due to their heritage, but as time went by, they eventually accepted them!

Maybe it was a firecracker! No, that would not make any sense. It was a typical, sunny day, not a festive holiday! Someone moving something into his or her house could have dropped something. No, it could not be! A tad sound from the distance could barely be heard even with the most sensitive ears!

The fire of another bang confirmed Link's worst fears. It came from a gun.

Right at the moment when the light turned green, like if he was trying to mimic it, Link turned and began to dash back to his apartment. "Wink! Wiiink! Where awe you going?!" he heard Toon screeched in surprise.

Link did not turn and reply. Although Toon was a helpless five-year-old without guidance, he knew that he will catch up to him. He knew that Toon was unharmed and able to run around on his own.

However, his parents were not with him. That was his biggest concern. How was he supposed to know if his parents were all right?

Link's hurrying footsteps slowly stopped as Link warily approached his home. As air painfully washed up and down in his dry thought, he tried to slower his breathing. His breathing was as loud as a vacuum cleaner in the silent, still neighborhood.

Shaking feet nervously approached the alleyway, prepare to flee at the sign of danger. Much to his relief, Link only saw a scurrying mouse warily dart behind a trashcan, which was filled with a stinking bag of junk. It was a sign that read: No one is hiding and preparing an ambush!

Toon's quickly yet tiredly waddled to Link, his face red from exhaustion. "Wink... I caught up to you... Why did... Y-You run back?"

Link ignored Toon's question and placed a gentle hand on Toon's puffy, straw-yellow head, his azure narrowing sternly. "Toon, I am going to enter the apartment. I want you to stay here. Do not follow me, no matter what happens. If you see something scary like a monster, run away and get help. You understand?"

Confused, Toon blinked, his cat-like eyes widening. "Yes, I undershant, Wink."

Link smiled calmly and playfully ruffled Toon's hair before turning away. "I'm going... I love you, Toon."

"...I wove you too, Wink?" Toon asked, feeling messy and tangled like his hair. As he brushed his hair out of his face, he could only watch Link climb back into the apartment like they did before. "Wink? What's happening?"

The air was dense and still when Link stepped into his room. His stomach twisting and turning, he silently went to his closet and took out an aluminum baseball bat. Yes, he was not an Anthropomorphic, but a Hylian. Despite this, his sixth sense warned him that there was danger lurking in his house like a ghost.

Link looked up and noticed that his bedroom door was flung open, like if Toon never locked it. His hands shaking, Link slowly left his room and watchfully entered the hallway. He thought that his imagination was pulling on his emotional string cords. Maybe Toon incorrectly locked the door and Mom and Dad noticed that they were gone! Link anxiously smiled, trying to relief himself as he went towards the stairs.

However, the scene he saw downstairs caused him to crump his presumptions like paper and throw it into the trash.

Lying on the cold, flat floor in a pool of blood were his parents.

"Mom! Dad!" Link shouted panicky as he rushed down the stairs. He grunted into pain as he tripped over his own scurrying feet. The stinging, burning pain only halted him for a brief moment. In just a few seconds, Link was on his feet again, rushing towards his parents. Careful to not step into the blood, Link anxiously paced around and observed his parents. Please be alive... Please be alive... Please be alive for him and Toon!

"Mom? Dad?" Link shakily asked, hoping that his parents could hear him. His pointy ears drooped in realization as tears began to cloud his vision like fog. "M-Mom? D-Dad?"

How could he explain to Toon that his parents were just brutally murdered? It was not fair! Toon was only five! He should lose his parents at a mature age, not at the age of five! Thanks to reality's roll of the dice, Link and Toon were officially orphans.

"...Mom... Dad...?" Link could only say as he covered his face, trying to hold in his tears.

Sunk deep into his thoughts, Link failed to hear soft, stealthy footsteps soundlessly approaching him from behind. Without a single warning, a blunt, coarse hand snatched him by his dirty blond hair and yanked him to the ground. Sliding across the floor like a wet bar of soap, Link exclaimed in shock as he collided with a firm wall. The baseball bat flew out of his hands and clunked into the kitchen. Rubbing his head to ease the pain, he dizzily looked at his attacker.

What Link saw was one of the most terrifying people he had even seen. Walking closer to him with a loaded gun in his right hand and a glimmering dagger in his coat pocket, was a masked azure-haired boy. Of course, it was a bit ridiculous for Link to be scared of a boy near his age. But, it was not in this situation. The boy was armed with weapons, while Link only had his wits and baseball bat to defend himself with. Link glanced behind the boy at his departed parents. This was no assumption. This little boy-haired boy murdered his parents! Link then turned to face the boy, trying to identifying his facial features. Much to his horror, he could not. Other than the flowing, chin-length azure hair, the rest of the boy's identity was hidden behind a mask. Link could not judge and figure how to fight him!

"W...Who are you?" Link shakily spoke up, his wide eyes watching the boy's movement.

The Masked Slasher laughed, a distressing sound that sounded so innocent, cheerful, and carefree, yet laced with dark, ominous, bloodstained feelings. Link held back a chilling tremble. "Who am I? I am the Masked Slasher! You must have assumed that you are safe in daylight!"

Link slightly nodded. "Why... Why did you k-kill my parents?"

The Masked Slasher ignored Link's question and set the gun back into his pocket, before taking out his dagger.

"Why? WHY?!"

With an angry cry, the Masked Slasher grabbed Link by the throat and slammed the back of his head against the wall. "SHUT UP! DON'T ASK QUESTIONS!" he demanded, a roll of saliva trickling down the corner of his mouth.

Link swallowed nervously. What should he do? Should he try to fight back? Or should he run?

The Masked Slasher glared at Link for a few moments before remarking, "I see you with your adorable little brother all the time. You two seem so adorable... Do you love him? Is he the most precious thing in the world?"

Link only nodded and blinked, hoping that the Masked Slasher would soon release him.

With a smirk, the Masked Slasher gently set the dagger on Link's exposed throat, causing the Hylian to cringe in fear. Link felt sweat soaking his hair as he began to tremble like a miniature, tiny earthquake. No, was it really going to end like this?

"It would be a shame if he is left alone in this merciless, harsh world with no one to run to, wouldn't it?" the Masked Slasher began to chuckle cruelly.

"No, please! Please!" Link screamed, looking around hysterically for his baseball bat.

The twisted chuckle turned into dark, bitter laughter as the Masked Slasher rose the knife, about to plunge it into his next, pitiful victim.

"Please! I don't want to leave Toon alone..." Link begged, before lunging out his left fist at his attacker's face, whose reflexes were as sharp as his knife.

The fist missed the murderer's face by a few inches. "Oops! Missed me!" The Masked Slasher teased, diving the weapon towards Link.

"Wink!"

"What the—" Before he could finish his sentence, the Masked Slasher was cut off by a blur of lime green and blond that rolled into him like a bowling ball. The two tumbled into a wall with a painful thud.

"Toon!" Link gasped as he shakily got up. "TOON!" he shrieked as he hurried towards his little brother, scooped him into his arms, and began to back away from his attacker.

"Weave my bwother awone!" Toon boldy yelled at the Masked Slasher who hurried up to his feet and made a B-line to the back door. Cussing under his breath, the mysterious killer shoved open the door and fled the crime scene.

"Toon? You ok?" Link asked as he gently set the smaller Hylian on the ground.

"Yeah!" Toon noticed a bit of blood oozing from a small cut on Link's throat, probably left from the killer's assault. "You're hurt, Wink! Wet's get Mommy! She kan make it better!" His bright, teal eyes noticed his lifeless parents lying motionlessly on the bloodied ground. Oblivious to what has become to them, he innocently asked, "Wink? Why is Mommy and Daddy on the ground? What is dat red stuff?"

Link sadly looked down, trying to think of a way to explain to his little brother.

"Wink? Why are you so sad?"

Biting his lips, Link took a phone off the dining table and dialed 911.

"Wink? What's happening? What's wong with Mommy and Daddy?"

Putting the phone up to his ears, Link kneeled down next to Toon and set a limp yet warm hand on his head. His lips quivered as he tried to hold in his tears. No, he must stay strong for his brother! He could not be weak!

"Wink? Are you ok?"

"Toon, I'll try to explain." Link shakily smiled, trying to reassure Toon that he was well. "Mommy and Daddy are asleep."

"Den let's wake dem up!" Toon cheery responded.

"It won't work!" Link yelled, causing Toon to jump at the sudden explosive voice.

"Why?"

Link swallowed uneasily. "They can't wake up. They're gone..."

Realization struck Toon like a car. Although he was only five years old, he managed to crack the code Link made up. The pupils in his ears diluting in sorrow, he rushed into Link's arms and began to sob hysterically. Link finally allowed his tears to fall as he blinked the watery drops away.

Trying not to startle Marth awake, Link silently approached Roy's room where the bluenet was sleeping. Before stepping into the room, Link untangled his hair, which was stuck together with oily butter and raw egg whites. Yep, he shouldn't have listened to Toon! He could not cook at all, not even with the help of his friends!

With a soft smile, Link entered Roy's room. "Hey Marth, ya up?" he quietly asked as he approached the bluenet's bedside. Something alarming caused Link's smile to fall like a waterfall, creating a pool know as a frown.

No, Marth did not depart. It was rare for a fever to eliminate a person. Marth was still asleep, his chest rising and falling in harmony with his breath. What caught Link's attention was his facial expression. A hurt, guilt-stricken expression was taped over Marth's face. His brows were curved in despair while his eyes were clenched shut in distress. Link rubbed his eyes in bewilderment, as he thought he saw a tear roll down Marth's cheeks.

"Hey Marth, you ok?" Link asked in worry as he gave a small nudge on Marth's shoulder.

Marth's body twitched in jolt before he painstakingly opened his cerulean orbs. His glassy eyes turned to Link.

"...I'm... Ok..." he quietly replied, before averting his gaze.

Link was a bit stunned. Marth looked so depressed... Trying to brighten the mood, he noted, "Breakfast is done. Come downstairs and eat with us! It's not the best one, but it's better than nuthin'!"

Link nodded and turned to leave. Behind him, he heard Marth sluggishly get out of the bed and pause. A little confused, Link turned around and saw Marth hesitantly waiting for him to leave. His cerulean-blue eyes were timidly directed at his feet, like a child who were being scolded.

"What are ya waitin' for, Marth? Are you hungry?" Link asked, raising a brow.

Marth jumped and gasped anxiously. "No, I'm not! I'm waiting for you to leave!"

"Why?" Link was becoming a bit curious yet worried.

"Because I don't want to hurt you."

Link's azure eyes widened at the strange answer. "Huh? Marth, you never hurt me before!"

"I... Ah... uh... I don't want you to get sick!" Marth piped up, clutching his fists so tightly, Link thought he was going to draw blood.

Link laughed at Marth's childish answer. "Marth, don't you worry! As long as we don't share the same foods and all, I don't get sick!"

Marth nodded at Link's reassuring statement and the two began to head downstairs together. As they went down the stairs, he began to feel a tad strange. Yes, he did feel funny a couple days ago, but the feeling could not ignored! The tingling sensation mutated into a pair of hands that squirmed in his guts as they pulled on his strings.

"What is this?" Marth uneasily asked himself, suddenly not feeling safe. *"It's like, another person is in me..."*

Marth's thought process was interrupted by Link exclaiming, "Marth's here! Let's eat!"

Marth forced a tiny smile as he sat down across from Ike. Trying to calm himself, he took a splattered, disfigured pancake and plopped it onto his plate. The food landed with an obnoxious splat, like a bloody corpse. Marth twitched. A bloody body? Why did he think of that?

"Man, the pancake looks messed up!" Roy remarked as he got some bacon.

"Hey, don't hog the bacon, Roy!" Ike exclaimed with a frown. "Give some to everyone! It's the best food ever!"

"I thought it was chicken, Ike!" Toon piped up with a bubbly smile as he sipped his orange juice.

"It's second to chicken!" Ike responded.

Marth unsteadily ate his pancake. With each bite, he began to feel nauseous. Should he stop? He was feeling awfully hungry... Maybe it was his fever! Maybe it would go away if he drunk some cold milk! Trying to ignore the pressure tightening in his throat, Marth slowly drunk some milk. What was left to eat? A liquidly, poorly-cooked scrambled egg caught his attention. For some reason, it seemed very tasty and appetizing to him. Its creamy yolk resembled droplets of blood on the floor.

Marth, who set the egg on his plate, jumped in fright. Blood? Why was he thinking of blood?

Maybe he could stop thinking about blood by thinking about something else! As he shakily ate his egg, he began to watch Toon talk with Link. Despite there being five people in the room, Marth could not clearly hear the conversation. For a strange reason, the presence of the two Hylians made him sick.

Unable to stand his queasiness, Marth suddenly got out of his seat.

"Marth? Where are you goin'?" Link asked in concern.

"I feel warm." Marth answered without turning around. "I'm ok. I'll just splash some water on my face..."

Marth covered his mouth as he let out a loud choke. Hoping that his friends did not hear him, he approached the stairs. Sweat soaked into his pajamas as he totteringly went up the stairs.

"What's wrong with me?" Marth thought to himself, looking up. His cerulean eyes widened in horror at what stood in front of him.

The blue-haired, masked boy silently looked back with a tiny smirk.

With a shocked yell, Marth jumped and tumbled down the stairs, trying to hurry from the boy. Strangely, his body was petrified, like if there were chains binding him to the floor. The Masked Slasher wordlessly approached the frightened teenager, amused by the sight.

"Stop denying, Marth." He said with a twisted smile.

"W...Who are you?!" Marth asked, sitting up and pulling his knees closer to his body.

"My name is Marth. I am you. Don't you remember me?" the Masked Slasher spoke as he began to chuckle.

"No, I don't!"

The Masked Slasher laughed as he took his infamous knife out of his pocket and jabbed Marth in the head. Although there was no blood, Marth shrieked horridly in pain and curled in a helpless fetal position. His panicked voice echoed through the house.

"Remember, Marth." The Masked Slasher mocked as he began to vanish in thin air. "Remember."

Marth's gagged as he covered his mouth tightly as memories began to flood into his mind. Yes, he did want to remember his past! But, his realization was like a small, fragile tea cup. If too much warm tea was poured into it, it could overflow or even break!

Drop by drop, Marth began to remember.

The mask.

The tiara.

Elice.

Father.

Mother.

School.

Loneliness.

Cia.

The knife.

...

The asylum

...

"Marth!" Roy exclaimed as he rushed towards the kneeling Marth. "What happened?! Did you fall?!"

"Marth, did you break something? I can carry you." Ike asked, giving the smaller male a rough pat on the head. "...Marth?"

"Forgive... me..." Marth managed to unevenly croak out. In less than a second, Marth's breakfast—slimey, acidic, putrid liquids and solids tossed carelessly in a blender, splattered onto the floor, Roy's socked feet, and himself.

"Shit!" Ike mumbled as he hurried to the kitchen to get paper towels.

For Marth Lowell, time completely stopped. He did not hear Roy asking if he was ok and Link hurrying to him. He did not feel Link's gentle hand on his forehead in attempt to check his temperature. He did not hear Ike cusses and his furious voice asking how long the eggs were cooked. All of that did not matter. The only thing that mattered was—

His identity. He was a murderer.

Author's Notes: Cliffhanger time~ *Gets caused by Reapettes*

OT: OMG, I'm really sorry for the late updates! I'm been really busy with work lately! This chapter was kinda rushed, so please don't mind the typos! I should be asleep by now, but I really wanted to finish this important chapter!

Just to let you guys know, the next future chapters will be in the present. That does not mean I'm not leaving out Marth's past! I'm saving it for later!

Optional story questions:

Any suggestions on how present Marth should reconcile with Gharnef and his men in the present?

(Definitely optional) The heck is with these farting SSB stories appearing in this fandom?

Note: I don't own SSB!

Chapter 32: Chapter 32

"Please forgive me..." Marth begged to himself. *"Forgive me..."*

Dressed in a fresh, clean pajamas, Marth miserably lied on Roy's bed, blankly staring at the ceiling. Most people would assume that he was ashamed of vomiting in front of his friends, even though they constantly reassured him. Ike blamed the eggs. Eggs were not the best foods for an upset stomach. Link simply said it was just his fever. Worried about Marth's condition, Roy gave a quick call to Eliwood.

"Hello, Dad?" Marth heard Roy say on the phone, outside of his room. "Marth threw up. A few minutes ago! What can I do? Do you think he's ok?"

Marth rolled onto his left and sighed sadly, pondering. A stack of bricks, which weighted over a hundred pounds, was strapped onto his back, making it uncomfortable for him to move. Although he was the same person who heartlessly murdered and injured people—physically and mentally, he felt remorse over his actions. His intentions, which were meant to alter his world into an ideal paradise, were a ladder with a broken leg. It only made him fall into a pit of regrets. Now, he had to live with the fact that he killed people. He had to carry the bricks for eternity as a punishment.

"Oh, I should check his temperature? Hold on!" Marth heard Roy hurry into the bathroom. The sound of a cabinet opening and closing was followed by the redhead entering his room. Held in his right hand was a thermometer; his left hand held his phone to the side of head. "Marth, you awake? I need to take your temperature."

Marth just nodded and slightly opened his mouth, allowing Roy to put the thermometer in.

Roy's eyes widened a bit in awe. "The heck?" he mumbled to himself before saying, "Dad, it says 98.6!"

"Repeat that." Marth heard Eliwood order from the other line. The older redhead's voice had a tone of confusion.

"Marth's temperature is 98.6!" Roy repeated, speaking louder. "Don't ask me why! That's what the thermometer says!"

"Are you reading it correctly? A fever could not drop that quick!" Although Eliwood was at work, Marth could picture his skeptical yet surprised expression.

"I am! If I was holding it upside down, it would say '9.86'! What should I do now?"

There was a moment of silence; Eliwood was thinking. *"Tell Marth to stay in bed and rest just in case. Also, make him something light like soup. Do you know how to use a microwave?"*

"Yeah, I do!" Roy responded with a relieved smile. "I understand, Dad! Thanks! Sorry for interrupting your meeting!"

"It's fine! See you tonight!" Eliwood replied before the call ended.

Roy set his phone into his pant pocket before turning to Marth. "Hey Marth, Dad said to stay in bed and rest more. Are you hungry?"

"I am a bit hungry." Marth responded with a deadpan expression. "D-Don't work so hard, Woy! I'll make something for myself!" Tossing the bedcovers off his body, Marth carefully got out of the bed and proceeded going downstairs.

Roy immediately stepped in front of the doorway with a stern expression that resembled his father's. "Marth, Dad said get some rest! Did you listen?"

Marth smiled slightly in an attempt to reassure Roy. "Don't worry about me. I am fine! I'll get some rest once when I finish eating!"

"If you say so..." Roy said, allowing Marth to pass. *"Why is Marth talking so weird?"* he asked himself.

When Marth began to walk down the stairs, he heard soft, tapping footsteps behind him. He did not turn around, as he knew that it was Roy. Just Roy, nobody else. His friends already left.

A thought suddenly sprung up. Should he tell Roy that he remembered his past and identity? Marth felt that he should, as it was necessary. One way of the other, his adoptive family would discover his true identity. Might as well let them know to save some time. Also, it would clear some questions, such as "Who is Marth?", "What happened to him?", and "Why did the facility capture him?"'

However, how would his family react? Would they be disgusted with him? Would they bring him back to the torturous,

lonely, isolated asylum? Marth refused to return to the oppressive facility. Since he had a small taste of freedom, he refused to consume restrictions! Of course, there was a small chance the Pheraes would not believe him and laugh at his joke, though Marth did not want take the chance. The given statement was obviously supported with the fact he was abducted by the insane asylum's members.

"You sure that you know how to make some soup?" Roy asked cautiously.

"Yes, I am sure!" Marth answered, nodding at the redhead as he entered the kitchen.

"If you say so..." Roy quietly mumbled to himself.

What was with Marth? Roy went to the sofa and sat down with a sad sigh. He did not seem to be himself; Marth was viewed as a child to Roy and his close ones despite him being eighteen. Why was he suddenly acting like a grown up?

"Ting! Ting!" his phone sang, vibrating gently. With a blank yet unhappy expression, Roy brought out his phone and skimmed through the message.

"Hey Roy, how's Marth?" Link's message asked.

Roy's expressionless eyes slowly narrowed as he typed a response.

The night when the blue-haired boy escaped was a replay of the moment when the Masked Slasher died in his attempted escape. When the asylum learned of Marth's escape, they searched in every shoreline, beach, harbor, and even cities. It was quite frustrating for the workers. Their valuable, irreplaceable treasure—a large sapphire, slipped out of their fingers and rolled down a cliff. It could be anywhere, such as behind a bush, in plain sight,nor in a tiny cave.

"Sir, we report failing to find the boy in Smashburg." Gharnef heard Validar state.

Gharnef tightly clutched his phone. "Did you check the shorelines and every alleyway?"

"Yes, we did." Validar chuckled slightly to himself. *"Little boy fled the asylum like a bluejay... He must be hiding in a tree. Do you think someone is harboring him?"*

Gharnef thought for a minute. It did seem logical...

"Sir?" Validar asked.

"He might." Gharnef answered. "He could have found his foster family and flew off with them."

"Would you like us to inspect every single resident for him?"

Gharnef did not answer.

"Sir? Are you still there?"

"That will not be necessary. He already knows." Gharnef suddenly said.

"Does that mean no? Also, what do you mean by, 'he already knows.'? Sir?! Sir!"

Ignoring Validar's shouts, Gharnef calmly set his phone down and reached for a folder. Opening it, he skimmed through its contacts before taking out a tiny photograph of a younger Marth. Though it was black and white, Gharnef could see the cruel, hateful glare shimmering in the blunet's azure eyes.

"Don't try to flee, Marth Lowell." Gharnef thought sinisterly to himself. *"You can never rid your inner demons. Sooner or later, they will appear."*

A beeping microwave was responded by Marth carefully opening its door and cautiously taking a warm tray, a seat for a small bowl of chicken noodle soup. Marth then carried the cooked food to the table, where he sat down and carefully took the lid off the bowl. His hissed to himself in pain; the boiling stream tightly constricted his fingers.

Usually, people would just begin eating. Marth felt a bit awkward sitting alone at the table, though. He would like some company! Getting out of his seat, Marth forced a smile and quietly crept to the living room, where Roy was seated in the sofa. Although he did already eat, Marth wondered if he was still hungry. Maybe he could make him a small meal for a change!

"Woy? Are you still hungry?" Marth asked, trying not to surprise the redhead.

"No, I'm not!" Roy replied, looking over his shoulder and closing his phone. "Thanks anyway!"

"Are you sure?"

Roy nodded. "Yeah, I had a big breakfast with Link, Ike, and Toon! Well, it wasn't that good, but I'm full!"

"Are you sure you're not a teensy-bit starved?" Marth asked again, tilting his head.

"I am sure!" Roy suddenly exclaimed, starting to feel annoyed by Marth's question. Marth jumped, yet he managed to keep a straight, calm face. "Do you need something from me?" Roy raised an eyebrow.

"Well, it feels a bit odd eating alone." Marth finally decided to explain his true intention. "I would like some company. Do you care sitting with me? I will not mind if you say no."

"Err, sure!" Roy answered, making a small smile, hoping that it seemed agreeable. "I'll sit with you!"

Marth smiled and bowed down humbly, which made Roy emotionally raise a curious eyebrow. Why did he do that?

"Thank you very much." He replied as he went back to the kitchen.

"You're welcome..." Roy just said as he followed the taller bluenet.

As Marth quietly and wordlessly ate his tiny, light meal, Roy kept his eyes on his phone and hoped to not make eye contact with the person sitting across from him. Yes, the young man followed the alias Marth. Yes, he was same teenager his father discovered on the beach months ago. Yet, despite his appearance—azure hair, cerulean eyes, and a thin build, Roy felt that he was seated with a stranger. Marth simply was not acting like himself. What happened to the reserved, shy blush that colored his cheeks when he asked for something? What happened to his childish sayings? (At least Marth referred to him as "Woy"!). What happened to the bubbly, cheery Marth who always wanted to be by his friends' and family's side?

"I hope he is just playing a game on me." Roy thought to himself. *"This is going too far!"*

"Woy? May I ask you something?" Marth suddenly spoke up, finishing his soup.

"I don't want to talk to him..." Roy looked up from his phone. "What is it?" he questioned.

"How was your childhood like?" Marth asked curiously. "I would love to know."

Roy scratched the back of his head; he thought that Marth would know his backstory by now. "Well, you should know the drill." He explained. "I was born into the Pherae family. Eliwood is my father, while Ninian was my mother before she died. I had a pretty nice life, but things fell apart after when Mom died due to cancer. I became a self-conceded asshole until you came along. If it weren't for you, I wouldn't be sitting here with you!"

Marth made an unsatisfied frown. "No, not your past! Your childhood!"

"Ok, ok!" Roy began his description. "Basically, my childhood was brighter than today. I was accepted by everyone. Everyone changed when we got to middle school. Don't ask me why!"

"Metaphorically speaking, were you forced into a mold?" Marth interrogated, trying to roll the conversation.

"No! Well, I did screw up a lot, so Mom, Dad, and some teachers had to discipline me. Other than that, not really when I think about it!" Roy answered.

"Do you remember any specific moments from your childhood? Like noticing a lonely child from another school?" Marth added with a straight yet demanding face.

Roy blinked. Marth's questions were becoming awfully specific. "Well, I did meet and play with some other kids from different schools."

"How were they dressed? Was one of them dressed in a uniform? Did he know magic?"

"They were dressed like normal kids to me!" Roy gave Marth a strange look. "I don't think any of them knew magic. Besides, magic doesn't exist!"

Marth's cerulean eyes widened as a gasp fled from his open lips. *"He doesn't remember!"*

"Marth, why are you asking me these questions?" Roy suddenly asked.

Marth bit on his lips uneasily, trying to think of an excuse. "I-I was just wondering!" He lied, gathering the bowl. "Thank you for talking to me!" Marth thanked with a grin as he walked to the kitchen.

"You're... welcome?" Roy replied unsurely, watching the bluenet dump the dishes into the sink.

For the rest of the day, Roy tried to avoid Marth. Much to his relief, the awkward bluenet spent most of the day sleeping, following Eliwood's order. Though, he occasionally woke up and came to Roy for a short conversation, before returning to his room to rest.

Roy was becoming suspicious. This person was not Marth! Marth was a childlike eighteen-year-old with no memories of his past! This azure-haired teen was a mature young man who spoke formally and often did things himself. Though, whether Marth recovered his memories was an unanswered question. If he did, Roy thought that he would exclaim joyfully in the house. Judging from a situation two days ago, the bluenet dearly wanted to recall his past.

Marth was awoken by the sound of a door unlocking and Eliwood and Lyn stepping into the house, engaged in a conversation. He heard Eliwood greet Roy and Lyn questioning how was his day.

"How's Marth?" Marth heard Eliwood ask.

Rubbing the sleep out of his eyes, Marth got out of Roy's bed and quickly dashed out of the room, to the top of the staircase. "I'm doing well!" he called down, making the three members of his family looked up in bewilderment. "How about you, Mr. and Mrs. Pherae?" he asked as he quickly went down the stairs.

"Uh, we're fine!" Lyn answered, trying to hide her laugh. She never heard Marth speak like that.

"Let me check your temperature." Eliwood spoke once when Marth approached him.

With a nod, Marth allowed the older man to set the warm palm of his hand on his forehead. Eliwood curved his lips slightly in awe. The touch was not a deathly cold, nor a fiery boil. It was something described as normal.

"I think your fever is gone." Eliwood said, looking at Marth in hesitation. "Did you feel nauseous throughout the day?"

"No, I did not. Do you think I am well?" Marth asked to confirm.

"I think so."

"Well... that's good news!" Marth said to himself with a beaming smile as he turned to walk up the stairs.

When he was close to the top of the stairs, Marth heard an alarming sound. It was not considered as ominous as slow, silent footsteps stepping into the room, nor a gunshot. Rather, it was a faint whisper. It seemed harmless to some people, as he asked for validation. Through, this question was a blaring alarm to Marth.

"Mom? Dad? I need to tell you something." The question asked.

Marth felt his heart freeze like ice in nervousness. The question came from Roy! Did he manage to figure out that he recovered his memories? Would the Pheraes ask him what he managed to recall? If they did, should he tell them the truth of lie?

Trying to eavesdrop on them, Marth stealthily crept down the stairs and followed the Pheraes, who entered the dining room. There, he hid behind a wall and listened to the conversation.

"Did something happen today, Roy?" Lyn asked. "Did it had something to do with the breakfast fiasco this morning?"

Roy laughed for a brief moment before returning to a moment of urgency. "No, it isn't. It's about Marth." He whispered.

Marth's eyes perked up when he heard his name. This conversation was slowly becoming important...

"Go on." Eliwood urged.

"After when he threw up, he began to act really funny." Roy explained. "He started helping himself. Also, he seemed to have another personality. He started talking really strangely and even seemed a bit rude. Do you understand?"

"No, I don't." Eliwood answered.

"Me neither." Lyn said. "Roy, I think Marth is beginning to grow up. He must have noticed that he could not behave like a child."

"But, isn't this strange?" Roy protested, his voice rising. "This could not happen overnight! Did he seem to act weird to you guys? He asked those weird questions!"

"Yes, I noticed that." Eliwood partially agreed. "But, I think he asked those questions because he was sick. When you aren't feeling well, you tend to not focus."

"He was asking funny questions after when he threw up!" Roy continued, his voice rising like a blaring, upset missile. "Marth asked me how was my childhood and stuff like that!"

"Roy, calm down!" Eliwood ordered sternly. "You're overacting. Marth was probably curious!"

"Something's up with him." Roy stated. "I can feel it! We need to ask him what's up with him!"

"What if he says that he feels fine?" Lyn suggested. "What if he is just tired? I don't see what is wrong with Marth now."

"But, there is something wrong with me."

If there was one thing Marth was grateful for, he was grateful that people could not read each other's mind. He covered his ears as he walked up the stairs, trying to filter out the troubling discussion. Panicky, distressed warnings were blaring confusing, unclear orders at him. One warning told him to leave the conversation. Another one ordered him to keep hidden and continue listening to the Pherae's discussions. A third warning demanded him to step up and try to convince the three that nothing was wrong. Following his senses, Marth followed the first order. If he was discovered eavesdropping into the conversation or tried to convince his family that nothing was wrong, he would only dig deeper into the pit. His family would suspect something!

"Darn it, my memories returned too quickly." Marth grumbled to himself, reaching the top of the stairs. "I cannot adjust them to my liking immediately..."

"Maybe you can't."

Marth froze at the familiar voice, though he was not shocked or frightened. Rather, he was trying to reconnect with the voice's source.

"Oh, it's you." Marth coldly said.

"How long has it been? A couple of months? You seem to have unknowingly come across a perfect haven for you. A loving family, dependable friends, and a sense of belonging. Sadly, you just had to remember your bloody past and revert back to your old, marred self."

"Thanks to you." Marth growled. "I refuse to listen to you! This world never harmed me, do you understand?"

"Though, are you safe from your past? Aren't you afraid of the Pheraes discovering your bloodstained history? How would they respond? Do you want that perfect haven to shatter? Maybe you should eliminate them before they get the chance —"

"NO!" Marth stubbornly shouted, shoving the voice away.

Marth knew that his recovered remembrances permanently affected his view of the world and personality. Though, he never told anyone that he manage to remember. This was a chance for him to create a new mask; a mask that formed the perfect image of the pure, childlike Marth Pherae, and covered the vengeful, dark image of Marth Lowell.

Marth already achieved his utopian haven. He would not let anyone including himself bloodstain it.

Author's Notes: I finally mange to update this story for the reviewers' liking.

OT: Here's chapter 32! Again, this was kinda rushed, so don't mind the typos; I'll clean it up when I have the time. Just to let you guys know, I am going to change how some of the characters speak. (IE: Past Marth speaking much more formally.) Hopefully, this chapter pretty depicts Marth under a more in-chaacter light.

Optional Story Questions:

Who do you prefer: Childish Marth, rejected Marth, Masked Slasher Marth, or Serious Marth? (I hope you guys know what I'm trying to say!)

Do you think Marth will be able to hide his past from his family and friends? Why or why not?

Chapter 33: Chapter 33

As a human being, Roy regularly slept from night to daylight. Although he awoke on a regular basis—seven in the morning—during school days, his sleep pattern was as irregular as his mood swings during weekends and summer break. Free from responsibility, he often slept late and awoke late. The time he awoke depended on whether his father happened to noisily rush out of the house for work, whether the rowdy garbage truck clunked and banged down the neighborhood, and whether his cardiac rhythm was eager for the next day.

Though, being startled awake by a certain bluenet was not on his list—until now.

"Woy!" Marth screeched into Roy's ear, which rung frantically as its owner jumped onto Roy's bed and abruptly pulled the smaller redhead into his arms. "I feel better! I feel better!" he shouted joyfully.

"The fuck-!" Roy yelled as he squirmed hysterically in Marth's arms. "Why did you do that?!"

Marth's grin lowered into a hurt frown at the tone of Roy's voice. "I'm sorry, Woy..." he sighed sadly. "I didn't mean to do that. I was just so happy..."

Roy huffed as Marth released him from his agonizing grip. "It's cool. It's cool." Roy calmly replied.

"Hmmm..." Marth suddenly smiled naughtily. "Woy, didn't your dad tell you to not say the word 'fuck'?" he giggled.

"He did! I know!" Roy got out of his bed and went to the window, where he peered down at the empty driveway. "He's gone! That means I can say as many fucks as I want to!" he retorted, his face crunched in a comical angry expression.

"I think the reason why Mr. Eliwood doesn't want you to say 'fuck' is he does not want me to say that word!" Marth teased back. "It's too late though! Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck!"

Trying not to laugh, Roy gave Marth a stern, intimidating glower, which could have sent Ike running to the hills for refuge. "Look, Dad's been telling me to not say that word for a while!"

Marth stopped and smiled sweetly. "So, what do you want to do today?"

"I don't know." Roy shrugged and took his phone. "Let me ask Pit." He spoke as he quickly sent a message.

"Ok!" Marth replied happily as he flopped onto Roy's bed cheerily and hugged the covers gently.

Roy simply nodded and looked at his phone, his back turned to Marth. To an ordinary person, Marth seemed to be back to his old self; cheery, innocent, and childish. However, even though Marth displayed his usual personality traits, he seemed to be a bit *too* happy to Roy. Yesterday, Marth oddly behaved like a stern, sullen adult. The ingredients to his personality had a few slices of sour lemons, bland lettuce, and a sprinkle of mysterious, awkward spices. It was healthy, but it was too tasteless to eat. It was the polar opposite of his current attitude, which consisted of sweet candies, colorful ice creams, fluffy whipped creams, and sprinkles and a cheery to mark his innocence. Marth's sundae definitely tasted better than his salad, but eating too much of it could have lasting consequences; Marth could not behave like a child forever.

Comparing these two sides of Marth, Roy was undecidedly staring at the menu gawkily as he held up the line. Both of them were good in their own ways. Yet, which one was better? Roy enjoyed Marth the Sundae due to his bubbly personality and caring attitude , though eating him could leave him with rotten teeth. Logically, Marth the Salad was the best choice; he helped his digestive system. Being a teenage however, Roy did not enjoy eating bland, mild food, as he preferred food with some flavor.

"BUZZ!" Roy's phone jittered as it received Pit's reply.

"Is it from Pit?" Marth asked curiously as he got off the bed and looked at the phone over Roy's shoulder.

"Yeah. It says that he's busy." Roy sounded a bit doubtful. "That's funny. Pit usually tells me when he is busy in advance." Shrugging his arms, Roy looked at Marth for suggestions. "What do you want to do? Don't ask me, I have no idea!"

"Um..." Marth unsurely started. "I just remembered that I have work. I'm not sure if I can do something with you..."

"Oh..." Roy could only say. "Maybe I can hang out at the joint for the day!"

"But Mr. Dedede will kick you out!" Marth warned, looking down sadly.

"I'll buy something and try to stay there as long as I could!" Roy reassured with a wink.

Marth covered his mouth in a weak attempt to hide his smile. "O-Ok!" he replied.

After changing and getting ready for the day, Marth and Roy began to walk to the joint. It was an ordinary day. The day was nearly as innocent as Marth; it was not tainted with the past's horrific events. It was a video tape replaying a simple, easygoing day. The same people walked by or pass the two teenagers and the same cars rushed by them, sprouting gusts of wind that toyed with their hair and teased their eyes with dust.

With a soft smile, Marth quietly hummed a light-hearted tune. All right! Today was just like any other day; calm, relaxed, and uneventful! Nothing happened! It was just another normal day!

"Uh, Marth?" Roy suddenly asked.

Marth stopped in his path and looked behind his shoulder. "Yes, what is it?"

"You're walking too fast."

At that moment, Marth realized how far he was from Roy. Though it was only a few feet away, the distance was a great mile. If Marth had not heeded Roy's request, he would have left Roy alone in the dust. This moment was quite strange to both of the boys. Usually, the boy would walk side by side in public; neither of them led nor followed. They both took each other's suggestions.

"Sorry." Marth just apologized, waiting for Roy to catch up.

"Why are you walking so fast?" Roy asked questionably. "Are we late?"

"No." Marth bluntly replied as the two resumed their journey. "I just want to arrive early. If you arrive on time, you are considered to be late. If you are late, then you are fired."

Roy flinched at Marth's mature words. His sentences, invisible written words that could only be seen with the ear, were knives that jabbed him in the heart and head.

"Marth is kinda right." Roy spoke to himself, looking down at the ground. *"He does have a good point..."*

A frank, shift hand suddenly snatched Roy by the loose hood of his jacket, causing the redhead to shout in surprise and look back with large, surprised eyes. Marth—the hand's owner—sternly gazed back at his stepbrother. His blue orbs were narrow with disappointment, though Roy could see a sparkle of concern in the sea of cerulean.

"What is it?" Roy asked, his voice rising.

Marth pointed at the red light across the street. "The light is red." He explained coldly. "If I did not stop you, a car could have struck you."

"Gee, sorry..." Roy sighed a reply.

Although it was a harmless, soft sound, Roy's tired exhalation was a warning signal to Marth. Put your guards up! Your defenses are falling apart! If you do not rebuild it and defend it from invaders, Roy will learn the truth! Do you want to them to discover your past? Did you not want to go back to that asylum?

"Here we are." Marth said to himself as he and Roy entered the restaurant. *"I can't let my guard down now. If I do, everyone is going to learn."*

Ike, the bored, indigo-haired cashier at the counter, felt his heart flutter in bewilderment and his eyes widened as he recognized the azure-haired male enter with a shorter cardinal-haired male. "Is that who I think it is?!" Ike asked out loud as he left his work place and hurried to Marth, not minding the strange looks given by the patrons.

Roy beamed, trying to repress the undesirable feelings he had with Marth. "Yeah! It's Marth! He's back!"

Marth just solemnly and wordlessly nodded. He was not in the mood for a conversation.

Reading Marth like a book, Ike caught the shorter bluenet's mood and asked, "Hey Marth, what's wrong? You didn't want to go to work? It's all right, you don't need to work today! I'll just tell Dedede that you're sick!"

"It's fine." Marth replied with a small smile. "I am glad to work today." He added before walking around Ike to the kitchen.

Ike's brows lowered in suspicion, doubtful of Marth's behavior. "Hey Roy?"

"What?"

"Does Marth look different to you? There's something with him." Ike scratched his head.

"Shh!" Roy hissed. "Not so loud!" he whispered. "I'll text you tonight!"

Upon entering the kitchen, Marth was immediately noticed by Link and Zelda, who looked up from their work and recognized the soft footsteps.

"Hey Marth, ya back!" Link greeted, approaching Marth with a friendly smile.

Zelda just waved and returned to her work.

"Y-Yes, I am!" Marth replied, trying to sound cheery as he set his bag on the floor.

Link caught a tiny strain marked on Marth's voice. "Hey, ya don't sound so well. Are you tired?"

"No." Was Marth's simple answer. "What do I do today?"

Link attempted to stop the corners of his mouth from rising. Marth's stern tone were feathers bushing the tip of his nose. "Wow, Marth! Ya don't sound like ya old self! Are ya sure all is well?"

"Yes." Marth internally glared at Link. *"Just tell me what to do already..."*

"C'mon! Put a smile on that face!" Link roughly pulled Marth into his arms and began to ruffle his straight, azure hair with his quick, rapid fingers.

"AH!" Marth screeched, pushing Link away. "NO!"

Link's azure eyes slightly widened in shock. Did Marth just push him? Though she was not watching the scene, Zelda jumped in the inside. Was this person really Marth?

Marth caught Link's hurt expression. "I—uh... I'm sorry Link!" he exclaimed, his face turning red in "embarrassment". "I just don't like it when people do that to me without telling me..." Marth softly whimpered.

Link made a tiny, reassure smile. "Why didn't ya let me know before? It's all right, I understand!" he said before returning to work.

"Um, L-Link?" Marth timidly spoke up. "What do I do today?"

"Oh yeah!" Link exclaimed. "Your job today is to serve, I think. I'm just assumin' because no one expected ya to come to work today..."

"O-Ok!" Marth replied, trying to sound as innocent as possible.

Meanwhile, Roy sat at the corner of the joint, patiently waiting for his order. He began to look around the familiar room.

Although it had the same furniture and decorations placed at the exact spot, something was off. Roy could not put his finger on it. Was it one of the paintings on the wall? Was it tilted slightly? Maybe it was a chair that was not pushed in!

"There's something wrong." Roy mumbled to himself. "Especially with Marth."

The door's tiny bell rung as two certain teenagers entered the restaurant. Being the nosy person he was, Roy looked up and cringed when he recognized the obnoxious, rowdy couple. Surprisingly, the other patrons did not seem to mind them.

"Shit, they're here!" Roy thought to himself in alarm as he watched Ike take Wolt and Lilina's order. Although he seemed perfectly calm on the inside, Ike had a tiny, unnoticeable sparkle of annoyance in the cobalt eyes. Though, Roy could not see it; he was sitting too far. Hoping that the couple would not notice him, Roy took out his phone and pretended to browse on his phone. Maybe if he did not make eye contact, the two would not talk to him! Then again, they always ignored him.

Restraining his revived grudge, Roy silently watched Wolt and Lilina sit down at the table in the center of the room. *"Don't look at them."* He said to himself, growling quietly. *"Listen to Dad. If you don't pay attention to them, you won't get pissed*

off!"

Roy listened to his consciousness and tried to ignore the two. As seconds turned into minutes, his father's advice worked. Roy began to feel less resentment.

"This is working!" Roy thought joyfully to himself, keeping his eyes on his phone.

"Hey! Where's our order!" Wolt suddenly shouted.

With a frustrated snort, Roy looked up, wondering who became the unlucky target of Wolt's bullying. Much to his dismay, it was directed towards a certain blue-haired waiter. Marth, who was quickly cleaning up one of the tables, hurried into the kitchen with a stack of plates. He strained to clean up the area as soon as possible, as he disliked being in the target zone.

"Darn it, Wolt! Why do you have to be an asshole?!" Roy asked himself, facepalming. *"And Lilina, out of all the people, why did you choose this jerk? I understand if you choose a lucky guy over me, but why did you choose this shitface?"*

"Hey! Did you hear us?!" Wolt annoyingly asked again as Marth rushed into the open and collected the cups.

Poke.

"Can't you understand English?!" Lilina asked, joining in the harassment.

Poke.

"Wait, he probably got hit by a car and forgot how to!" Wolt remarked rudely, laughing along with his girlfriend.

Ike, who was close to the scene, tried to hold in his rage as Marth wiped the table with a wet cloth. "Don't get pissed..." he mumbled to himself, counting to ten. "Don't get pissed..."

Marth eventually went to the kitchen and arrived back with Roy's order—a freshly baked pepperoni pizza. He focused; he did not want to lose his balance and drop the order. This was Roy's meal! It had to be perfect!

"That's our order!" Wolt called.

Poke.

"Why is no one standing up for Marth?!" Roy questioned to himself, looking at the other customers, who seemed to not notice the commotion.

"Hey, didn't you hear me?!" Wolt crumpled up a napkin and threw it at Marth's head. It struck him directly on the forehead.

Poke.

With an irritated snarl, Marth violently slammed the order in front of Roy, who jumped and watched the bluenet confront the two.

"Yes, I heard both of you." Marth lividly replied, his eyes narrowed into a hateful glare.

"Why did you give it to that moron?" Wolt pointed to Roy.

Poke.

"He did not!" Roy hissed to himself, shaking in rage.

"It's because it is his order." Marth bluntly answered.

"I guess someone took our order incorrectly!" Lilina remarked.

Roy glanced at Ike, who was looking straight ahead.

Poke.

"No, he did not. You two just have to wait." Marth bluntly said, turning to leave the conversation. His eyes closed in a ire expression, he failed to notice Wolt's protruding foot in his path.

"A-Ahh!" Marth exclaimed as he stumbled onto the ground. He looked up at the two bullies. Instead of seeing a chortling

bluenette and greenet, he saw two certain wicked, smiling cousins—one being thin and the other being fat.

SNAP!

Just as Roy rose from his seat, the unexpected happened. With a livid scream, Marth swung his right hand at the two drinks sitting on the table, spilling the beverages on Lilina, Wolt, and himself. That was when everyone gave their attention to the commotion.

Marth could only helplessly look back and stay still. What should he do? Should he leave?

"Why did you do that?" Wolt harshly asked, forcing a fake, stern look. "Why did you do that?"

"My dress..." Lilina sighed.

Much to Marth's relief, Ike came to his aid.

"You two need to get out of here." Ike straightforwardly ordered, looming over the two teens.

"He started it!" Lilina protested.

Ike snarled furiously and scowled fiercely at the two smaller teens, who jumped in fright. "Do you think I am stupid like you? I saw everything! If you cannot treat Marth with respect, you cannot be here."

Wolt tried to protest, only to be cut off with a sword.

"If you won't leave, I will report this to our manager." Ike coldly warned.

Wolt and Lilina finally realized how serious this was.

"Fine, we're going." Wolt sighed, before turning to Lilina. "C'mon, let's go."

Lilina just nodded and hurried after her boyfriend.

As he watched the couple exit the restaurant, Ike noticed the eyes that looked directly at Marth with shock, horror, and even disgust. "Return to your business, please." Ike ordered. He blinked in satisfaction as the other patrons looked away and ignored the too.

Marth was about to sneak away when he was scooped into Ike's larger arms, which wrapped him into an embrace. "Hey, you ok?"

"Y...Yeah..." Marth could only blankly answer.

"Don't worry, it wasn't your fault." Ike reassured. "These assholes started it."

Marth chuckled and snuggled closer to Ike.

Ike's heart lightened when he heard the weak form of laughter from Marth. "Besides, you are not the type to hurt someone! The blame is not on you!"

"Oh..." Marth looked down sadly.

"Hey Marth, do you want to go home now?" Roy asked, joining the conversation.

"No, I'm fine." Marth said as he was released from Ike's hug. "I would like to continue working."

"Wait, Marth-!" Roy started.

Marth failed to hear Roy's call. Thanks to a pack (or a pair!) of ignited dynamite, he managed to accidentally blow a broad ravine between him, Roy, and possibly Ike. His currently dilemma was not how to hide the explosives. It was already demolished. Everyone already saw the mushroom cloud.

Marth's new problem was repairing the damage.

Author's Notes: Thanks to daylight savings time, I am officially exhausted.

OT: Whoop! Here's the late update! I recently got a new software program, which explains late updates an whatnot.

I'm going on spring break soon, so that should translate to more updates!

Story Questions (Optional):

(Why don't you ask me a question? It could be on this fanfic, other fanfics, and personal preferences. Please don't be too personal!)

(Definitely optional): Any suggestions on what should happen in future chapters?

Chapter 34: Chapter 34

Much to Marth's relief, his day continued rather smoothly—cleaning up tables and serving food to the patrons. However, that did not mean his day was cleaned up. Like his dress shirt, it was already strained. If one were to look closely at Marth, they would see the mess and come to the conclusion that something happened.

Marth hoped that he did not cause any suspicion. With a calm, deadpan expression, he continued his work. Though, his shell did not correspond with his inter turmoil.

He was anxious; he exposed his dark, inner self in public at the snap of a dime. If he wanted to keep his utopian haven together, he must create a mask that hid his true mental identity—a normal, cheerful, innocent young man adopted by the Pherae family. He was Marth Pherae, not Marth Lowell!

"Smile at Limk when you pass by him." Marth thought to himself as he entered the kitchen holding three plates and cups, and a knife. *"That will reassure that everything is fine!"*

Marth smiled softly at Link—who was setting a pizza in an oven— as he dumped the utensils into the sick and began to wash them. To his relief, Link responded with a trustful nod and a cheery smile. His smile widening and face flushing a lively pink, Marth continued his work. This was beginning to work! Link smiled back at him, which meant that he did not suspect anything!

Wait, did not suspect anything?

"Despite the commotion you caused, Link seemed to not suspect anything." Marth froze, his eyes widening as he heard the sudden, grim voice. *"Seemed to."*

"I trust Link!" Marth mumbled to himself, beginning to zone out of reality into a timeless, dark space. "He does not suspect anything! He smiled back!"

"What if he created a reassuring mask to trick you? A smile does not prove anything! He can report your behavior to someone and get you back to the insane asylum!"

Marth's brows lowered into a angry glare. "I trust Link. Link is my friend! Why would he report me to the asylum?"

"For revenge. Do you not remember what you did to him several years ago?"

Marth looked up. Now in a tiny, homely apartment, he noticed two adult bodies lying motionlessly on the ground in a pool of blood.

"...I cannot recall..." Marth lied.

"Don't try to lie to me! I known you since birth! I record all of your decisions!

"Silence." Marth ordered, trying to ignore the dark voice. He clutched his fists tightly.

"See that knife? If you don't want to be sent back to the asylum, maybe you should eliminate him right now and—"

"I SAID SILENCE!" Marth exclaimed suddenly, not noticing the simple yet sharp knife held in his soapy, slippery right hand.

A slash of pain on his left palm was what Marth noticed next. Looking down, he watched the bubbly, harmless soap suds turn pink as blood oozed out of his cut. Feeling a tingling, piercing sting, Marth hissed in pain and immediately rinsed his left hand with cold water in attempt to relief the wound—a fiery burn. He did not know what happened, though he assumed that the knife slipped out of his right hand and happened to strike his left palm with its pointy end.

"Marth! Ya all right?!" Link asked urgently, rushing towards the wounded bluenet.

Forcing a calm smile, Marth answered, "I am fine, Link. I just accidentally cut myself."

With a concerned look, Link suddenly grabbed Marth's unharmed, right hand and dragged him to a nearby cupboard in the kitchen.

"A-Ah!" Marth cried out in surprise. "Link, what are you doing?!"

"I'm gettin' some bandages for ya." Link answered sternly as he opened the cupboard and took a white first aid kit.

"Don't fret over me, Link." Marth tried to protest. "It is just a little cut. I just need to wait for a while for it to stop bleeding."

"Don't forget that we're in a restaurant." Link reminded bluntly, opening the kit and taking a bottle of rubbing alcohol and a large cotton ball. "Your blood can dirty the food. Also, that cut can get infected!"

"Link..." Marth could only say as he watched the blond open the bottle and dab its contents with the cotton.

Link carefully took Marth's hand and gently rubbed the cut. Although Marth winced quietly at the sting, he kept looking at the Hylian strangely. Why was he treating him this way?

"There ya go! Ya all right now!" Link beamed as he finished wrapping white bandages over Marth's hand.

After opening and closing his hand carefully, Marth gave Link a wretched look—his eyes narrowed slightly and his brows curved up along with his frowning lips.

"Marth? Ya all right?" Link restlessly asked. "Are ya hurt in some other place?"

"...Do you remember me, Link?" Marth suddenly asked, tears starting to form in his cerulean eyes.

"Yeah! I remember ya!" Link answered boldly, not knowing what Marth was actually asking. "You're my friend!"

"No, Link." Marth sighed sadly. "I meant to ask you if you met me before."

Link pondered for a few moments. "Ehh... No! I don't think we met before. Why do you ask?"

Marth did not reply; he simply stood in front of Link, trembling slightly.

"Marth?" Link asked again.

"...Please excuse me." Marth just said, before turning to leave the kitchen.

Tears dripping onto his already-stained shirt, Marth hurried into the men's bathroom, where he went into one of the stalls, sat down on the toilet, and bit his lips in a futile attempt to stop his tears. He began to cry, not from cutting himself with the knife or feeling like a burden, but from Link's act of kindness. Being someone who harmed Link both physically and mentally, Marth knew he did not deserve his help or even his friendship. Yet, Link somehow could not recognize him, thanks to the mask he wore over his face on that fateful day. With the addition of Marth's temporary anemia, the two managed to become great friends.

However, Marth now remembered his past, including the nasty deeds he did. How could he still be friends with Link knowing what he did to him? Marth was conflicted between his morals and desires. If he did not tell Link the truth, he would remain friends with him, though he would struggle to hide the past away from him. Telling Link what he did to his family years ago could relieve emotional stress. However, even though it was years since the deed was done, Marth knew that his friendship with Link will shatter. Link would never forgive him for murdering his parents.

The restroom door suddenly opened, followed by a series of footsteps and Link's voice asking, "Hey Marth, you here?"

Marth quickly wiped his tears on the sleeve of his shirt and unevenly croaked, "Y...Yes..."

Link carefully pushed the stall open and approached Marth. "What's wrong?"

Looking down, Marth began to weigh pros and cons. Should he tell him...?

"Marth? Are you sick? I can tell Roy, who's sittin' outside, and he can take ya home if you like." Link suggested.

"...No, I'm not ill..." Marth softly replied, shakily slightly.

"Then what's wrong?" Link questioned.

"...I just feel like a burden." Marth lied, looking up at Link. "Link, I am eighteen. I should be more responsible for my own actions."

"What did you do wrong?" Link was confused.

"Stabbed myself in the hand with that knife." Marth simply answered. "You did not have to take care of me. I could have tended the wound myself."

"Marth, do ya know what a friend is?" Link stood next to the bluenet and set a gentle hand on his head. "Friends help each other."

"But, I do not deserve to be friends with you." Marth abruptly stated.

"Why?"

"...I beg you to forget what I just said." Marth simply replied, looking away from Link.

"Is it about the thing that happened with Wolt and Lilina?" Link asked, earning a shaking head from Marth. "C'mon, it is!"

Finally giving in, Marth nodded, earning a rough noogie from Link.

"Let's get back to work!" Link spoke to Marth with a supportive smile, before leaving the restroom.

Marth nodded his head in agreement before standing up from his seat. Before leaving though, he stood in the middle of the stall for a few moments.

"Link, you lucky, ignorant fool."

"Hey Woy! We're ready to go now!" Roy looked up from his phone and saw Ike, Link, and Marth standing in front of him.

"Oh, that fast?" Roy asked, setting his phone in his pant pocket. "Ok! Let's go!"

As the four left the restaurant, the three began their conversation. It was a regular evening. The sun was setting, slowly sinking into the silhouettes of the buildings. Strangers and cars were rushing by, taking no notice in the teens. A wave of midnight blue and purples washed over the city, overpowering the warmer, lively colors.

"So, you managed to stay in there for hours without Dedede kicking you out?" Ike asked, trying not to laugh.

"I sat in the corner!" Roy replied, laughing slightly. "Actually, I'm not sure if he actually left his office. I didn't see him!"

"That's because you've been lookin' at your phone for a long time!" Link teased.

"Hey! At least I don't write about my girlfriend in a diary!" Roy naughtily retorted.

Ike laughed hysterically at Roy's remark; he felt his stomach tensing with butterflies. Meanwhile, Link's face and ears turned red in embarrassment.

"So! At least I have girlfriend!" Link protested. "Unlike you!"

"Uh, guys...?" Ike spoke up unsurely.

"Hey! Don't you dare say that!" Roy argued.

"GUYS!" Ike yelled, finally getting his friends' attention.

"Oh crud!" Roy blurted out before asking, "What is it?"

"Where's Marth?" Ike asked, looking around uneasily.

"Shit!" Roy exclaimed before glancing around for the azure-haired male. "Marth! Maarth!"

"Dang it, where can he be?!" Link looked behind him and spotted a speck of blue in a hurrying crowd of people. "There he is!" he exclaimed.

Marth was a few feet away from his friends. Looking down at the sidewalk, lost in his thoughts, his head jolted up when he heard his friends call his name.

"Hey Marth! Hurry up!" Ike called.

"Oh!" Marth cried out, rushing towards his friends while bumping into several people in the process. After whispering a few "Sorry.", he finally caught up with his friends.

"Forgive me." Marth apologized, bowing down slightly. "I was caught up in my thoughts."

"Marth, being left behind is just as bad as leaving a friend behind!" Roy commented. "Don't do that! We thought that we lost you!"

"S-Sorry..." Marth could only say.

Deep in his heart, Marth wished that he did get lost. It meant that he was freed from the duties of being Marth Pherae to his friends and could live peacefully with his dark past behind him like a harmless shadow. He could create a new mask, also called a new life.

But, Marth enjoyed living with the Pheraes. He had a loving father, mother, and younger brother who cared about him, despite not being blood related. In addition, he also had Link, Ike, and Pit by his side. They were the columns helping him support his temple. So if he happened to leave, everything will collapse. It was Marth's duty to not abandon them like what his family did.

"Hey Marth, we're home!" Roy said, nudging Marth who was staring into space.

Marth blinked rapidly as he looked around his neighborhood. That quick? He must have been thinking that hard...

"See ya guys later!" Link waved at his friends happily before entering his room.

"See you, Link!" Ike called before turning to Marth and Roy. "Well, I'll talk to guys later! See you tomorrow!" Ike approached Marth and ruffled his azure hair quickly before racing across the street. "Lighten up, Marth!"

Roy watched Ike enter his home while Marth tidied his bangs, allowing them to fall into his eyes.

"Well, let's go Marth!" Roy spoke to the bluenet as the two approached their home.

"Ok..." Marth replied. As Roy unlocked the door, Marth turned around and looked at Pit's house. "I wonder how's Pit doing..."

"I hope he's doing good." Roy responded as he opened the door. "I tried texting him, but he isn't replying."

"...Oh..." Marth could softly said.

Roy looked back at the blue-haired male with a small smile. "So, do you want to watch TV with me? I think the mystery murders show is playing now!"

Marth cringed painfully in the inside. "No. Roy, I am feeling a bit tired. May I take a small nap upstairs?"

Frowning in the inside, Roy nodded calmly with a monotone expression. "Ok." He just said.

Marth thanked Roy with a small nod and began to head upstairs. Once when he reached the top of the stairs, he heard a new source of voice.

"Hello Roy, how's your day?" Marth heard Eliwood ask.

"Good." Was Roy's blunt, upset reply.

"What's wrong? Did something happen?"

"No. Just leave me alone Dad."

Marth guiltily looked down at the floor before entering Roy's room. The tone of Roy's voice was distant, yet familiar. It was nearly like a dead, repressed memory revived with a spark. But, when did he hear it? When did he hear that dismayed lonely tone of voice?

Marth heard it when he met Roy for the first time. Roy was slowly drifting back to square one.

A blunt, icy touch; a feeling that Marth felt on his wrists, neck, and ankles. Grinding on the knotted cloth forced tightly in between his teeth, the young man struggled against the chains restraining him on the flat table, the links clattering and his inaudible grunts echoing into the darkness. His bangs fell helplessly over his cerulean orbs, which glared directly at a large beam of light hanging overhead. He squinted, as the bright light stung his sensitive eyes.

Exhausted, Marth finally stopped his struggles. Sweat twinkled down his head as he gasped urgently for fresh air through the asphyxiating gag. His drained, flickering orbs faintly looked around his dim surroundings, trying to identify his

location. Where was he?

"My, what do we have here?" a cold voice suddenly asked.

Marth immediately glanced at the source of the voice and paled; it was Gharnef. Held in the elder's hand was a surgical scalpel. What was he going to do with that small yet sharp razor? Marth's eyes widened fearfully as Gharnef approached him.

"Now, which part shall I dissect first?" Gharnef asked himself, gazing down at the vulnerable teen.

With a muffled cry, Marth continued to thrash against the iron, snake-like shackles that bounded him. Much to his angst, more chains suddenly lunged at him, trapping both of his legs together and pinning his arms to his abdomen. Unable to move or protest, Marth could only fearfully look up at Gharnef, who was still observing his restrained body.

"Do you know how much you are worth?" Gharnef asked Marth, who titled his head slightly. He brushed the azure bangs out of the youth's eyes, exposing his forehead. "A lot of money, if I perform his experiment right. Now, I shall start with the forehead."

As the scalpel gradually went closer to him, Marth resumed twisting in his bindings, only to have Gharnef harshly grab him by the throat, slightly strangling him. With a choke, Marth's eyes enlarged as he felt the tip of the knife lightly touch his forehead.

"Don't be scared. This will only hurt a bit." Gharnef reassured to the whimpering bluenet.

The sound of a knife ripping into flesh was followed by Marth's stifled yet bloodcurdling scream.

With a short cry, Marth jerked awake and immediately sat up in his sleeping bag. His cerulean eyes cautiously looked around Roy's room as his breathing gradually slowed, calming the bluenet.

"It's a nightmare." Marth sighed, calming himself. "It's just a nightmare."

Did he wake someone up? Marth soundlessly got up and looked at Roy, who was still asleep in his bed. He then glanced at the hallway. The lack of the blazing, orange light indicated that Eliwood and Lyn were still asleep.

"That's good... Everyone's still asleep..." Marth mumbled to himself with a tired smile.

Just as Marth was about to go back to sleep, he spotted Roy's phone sitting on the bed stand. Though he normally ignored it, a mysterious feeling told him to unlock it. Something was dangerous in that phone.

Marth began to resist, though he eventually let go. He did have a nightmare, so it was difficult for him to fall back asleep. He could nosily browse through the web to pass some time.

Silently picking up the phone, Marth unplugged the device from its charger and turned it on, only to be responded with a lock scream asking for a password. Marth twisted his lips as he looked at the bright scream. What was the password? He did see Roy unlock his phone in plain sight many times! He should have known the password by now!

It could be 1961.

Much to Marth's luck, he managed to enter the correct password. He could now use Roy's phone! Now, where was the web? Marth looked at the phone's colorful icons for a browser. As he searched for the image, he accidentally passed the "messages" icon, bringing him to a collection of texts.

Marth's logical brain told him to ignore the messages and return to the browser. However, his heart warned him that there was something ominous hidden beneath those messages.

"Well, one message could not be harmful." Marth said to himself as he tapped on a message sent to Link.

Marth was wrong.

In the conversation, Roy asked Link how Marth was during work. Much to Marth's horror, Link told Roy every detail—from Marth cutting himself with the knife to him hiding in the bathroom. Currently thinking that it was just talking about today's event, Marth scrolled up to check past messages. His muscles tensed in shock as he read Roy's sent message; it talked about how strange he was acting after vomiting on the floor. Link replied with a promise that he would be on the lookout for Marth's erratic behavior.

"Maybe it's just Link!" Marth uneasily mumbled to himself, tapping on a series of messages sent to and from Ike.

Wrong. The digital conversation between Roy and Ike was nearly the same as the one with Link, only that this one had more cuss words and lazy grammar errors. It mentioned the same thing: Marth is acting weird, he did this, he did that, what happened to him?

Marth tightly clutched Roy's phone as he felt the chains from his nightmare circle around him. He felt trapped; should he tell his loved ones the truth, run, or keep on hiding?

Being a human, Marth wanted to run. He wanted to run away and begin a new life. But... Marth looked at the sleeping Roy and remembered the short, withdrawn conversation he had with Eliwood. That meant abandoning his loved ones. Marth did not want them to share the same lonely experience he had in the past.

Marth noticed Elice's fake tiara sitting on the bed stand. It sitting in the glimmering moonlight was a symbol of his older sister's kindness and undying love to him that provided an answer for him. He was willing to put on a mask just for his family.

Author's Notes: We are all complicated like Marth in one way...

OT: Well, guess what? I'm finally on spring break! Despite this, I'm still unsure if I am able to upload quicker, as I am busy with assignments, projects, and studying for tests in May. This is kinda rushed(again), so ignore the errors!

Answers to reviewers' questions (Received order):

Shadow of Darkness 78: To be honest, I kinda follow your trick of writing the characters. What I normally do is search up the characters and read up on their "canon" personality. Then I would make inferences on how they would be in real life with references from people in real life, other fictional characters, etc. Depending on how it is written and the story, I don't mind if a character is OOC is it actually makes them more relateable. I don't not do roleplays, so I cannot really answer this part of the question. Maybe you can follow the way you portray a character,

JadeAlyss: ***I do not know how many chapters are left in this story. I can assume that it will be around 40 chapters long. As for the stories, I do have some stories planned after, however I am still considering them.***

Ignitious: (Hehe, long questions are long!)

A: An element that inspired this story is the manga/anime Elfen Lied. I enjoyed the subject of the manga (The anime is too short; the theme of the manga is the views, differences, behaviors, emotions, etc of humans.), so I wanted to portray the same subject with SSB characters. I originally wanted Ike to be the serial killer, but I felt he already received enough spotlight in my other fics, leaving Link and Marth on the list. I eventually scratched out Link, as him being prejudiced due to his heritage sounds too similar to Elfen Lied. I felt that Marth was better with that role because he does not seem to be who he really is at first glance, and he is just a human.

Another work that influenced this story is the book The Great Gatsby. My English class had to read it for an assignment. Despite it being a bit hard to understand at first, the storyline becomes dark quickly. It shows the efforts Gatsby makes to mold himself into the image he wanted to be. (I'm trying not to spoil the story! If you're interested, check out the book!) This might reflect the characters struggling to fit in or create their ideal self.

Also, some parts of the story is influenced by my current experience in high school. I look at some people (Especially the ones I don't like!) and I see them trying hard to be someone they are not. Though, this makes me a hypocrite; all people's behavior vary depending on the situation and the people they are with. In other words, my behavior towards my friends is different towards my parents, teachers, coaches, etc...

B: I sound like a fangirl when I say this, but I enjoy writing Link, Ike, Marth, Roy, and Pit the most. The five (excluding Roy; SSBB was my first Smash Brothers game) were pretty much the first SSB characters I played as. Link, Marth, and Ike are three of my mains. That does not mean I write about them all the time; I enjoy writing Fox, Falco, and Sonic as rivals, Kirby messing around with Meta Knight, Luigi and Mario's relationship, the Child Brawlers, etc...

Admittedly, I do not like writing about the newer SSB characters (IE: Mega Man, Dark Pit, Bowser Jr., etc...) It's mainly because I am unfamiliar with them and I have a hard time characterizing them. Hopefully, that will change with the addition of Shulk in the gang.

C: For characters that aren't in SSB games, I enjoy writing about the "parent" characters associated with some of the Smashers. For example, I can picture Chrom, Palutena, Eliwood, Elice, and (maybe) Rusl hanging together and talking

about their "kids". Maybe they can get into some mischief, despite being adults! Also, don't forget about Ghirahim. I know that he doesn't show up in my Smash Mansion fics, but he was fun to write in this story!

Disclaimer: I don't own SSB!

Chapter 35: Chapter 35

"Woy?" Marth stood quietly by Roy's bedside. With an unsure look, he could only watch the redhead sleep. Should he wake him up, or should he leave him alone and patiently wait?

Fidgeting with his tie, Marth glanced at the clock, which read 10:30, sitting on the bed stand. It was quite close to his work shift; his shift started at 11:00. Marth glanced back at Roy and lightly bit his pale pink lips, a bit indecisive. He wanted to leave for work as soon as possible, as he did not to keep Ike and Link waiting and get scolded or even fired for arriving let. But, Marth did not want to just walk off without telling Roy, as it gave him the impression that he just ignored him and continued with his daily life.

Like some people Marth knew...

With a soft smile, Marth leaned his head to Roy's ear and quietly whispered, "Woooy?"

Without opening his eyes, Roy uttered, "Yeah?"

Marth frowned briefly. Roy sounded so tired... "I'm going to work now. Do you wanna come with me, Ike, and Link?"

Roy stretched—his joints cracking in satisfaction, and slowly opened his navy blue eyes, orbs that were still clouded with sleepiness. "No." he yawned. "I'm still tired. I might hang out with Pit later if he's willing to. If not, I'll hang out in the joint again."

Marth smiled sweetly and ruffled Roy's cardinal hair before turning to leave. "Goodbye, Woy." he said before leaving the room.

Waiting in front of the driveway, Ike and Link kept their eyes on the Pherae's front door, waiting for their azure-haired friend. To people who barely know or do not know the three teens, today seemed to be a regular day. They were following their usual routine: get up, get ready for work, wait for their friends, go to work, work, and return home. Nothing changed, unless one of them had to go somewhere, did not have work, or was out sick.

However, if they knew was occurred in the past few days, their day was far from normal.

"Hey Ike, I have somethin' to ask ya." Link spoke, making eye contact with the indigo-haired male.

"Yeah, what is it?" Ike replied.

"Do you think there's somethin' with Marth?" Link asked, his pointy ears lowering slightly in worry. "I mean, he's been acting different ever since he got kidnapped and all."

"Yeah, I think so. Do you think it's trauma?" Ike suggested. "I mean, you know where he was taken to, right?"

"Yep. That asylum that tried to take you." Link adjusted his green cap. "But, doesn't trauma develop after being exposed to lots of stress over a long time?"

"I think so. But, maybe Marth reacted differently." Ike guessed, shrugging his arms. "You know how innocent he is?"

"Yep." Link nodded. "I don't think he can last in that place for a week. Glad that he managed to escape, though."

Ike gnarled on his teeth and clutched his fists in response to an angry thought.

"Hey, what's wrong?" Link asked, noticing the bluenet's abrupt action.

"I wish that damn asylum can blow up!" Ike growled. "I don't mind if they take someone like me, but if they someone like Marth, someone's gonna fucking die!"

"Ike, some people should not be here with us. They are dangerous." Link tried to explain.

"Marth isn't dangerous!" Ike retorted, his furious voice growing louder by each passing second. "Don't you see? The insane asylum snatches innocent people up just so they can get more fucking money!"

"Whaaat?!" Link exclaimed in shock, his normally-calm voice just as excited as Ike's. "How do you know about this?!"

Unbeknownst to the two teens, across the street in Pit's home was a unobtrusive figure seated in a sofa, looking directly

out the windows at them. Clutching her magazine tightly in her jagged, green hands, which were laced with pointy fingernails that gave them the impression of rigged claws, she resisted the urge to stomp out the door and scream at the two to silence.

"I'll give them a few minutes..." she grouchily mumbled to himself, looking back at her magazine."I hate children and teenagers..."

Much to her frustration, Ike and Link did not stop talking.

"Look, my Dad once applied for a job at that place, but he left after when he found out I am bipolar!" Ike explained. "He knows what goes on in there! He warns me and my sister Mist about these people! Don't believe me? Ask him now!"

"All right, I believe ya!" Link held up his hands. "You and Marth are proof!"

The explosive sound of a door slamming open was what caught Ike and Link's attention. Turning around, they made eye contact with one of the ugliest women they had ever seen. The woman was Beanish, meaning at she had green skin. Her glaring, enraged, pink eyes were as sharp as the teeth that bit her lips. Atop her head were a light-blue bead and two purple horns. The Beanish was garbed in an old-fashioned dress that had a small resemblance of a witch's.

"Can you kids shut up!?" Cackletta shouted angrily, swinging a fist towards Ike and Link. The two teens immediately silenced. "Gee, teenagers those days..." she mumbled to herself as she went back inside, the door closing after her.

Ike and Link looked at each other for a few moments. Who was that?

"Man, what an ugly bitch..." Ike boldly spoke out loud.

Link quickly covered his mouth with his hand, stifling his laughter.

"So, going back to Marth..." Ike started sternly.

"Oh yeah! Well, I think I know why Marth actin' so differently." Link responded.

"What is it?"

"When I moved here, Roy told me that Marth got into an accident a month or two ago." Link explained. "He was found washed up on the Smashburg Beach all alone with no memories. The Pheraes agreed to take care of him until her remembers somethin'. So maybe he recalled somethin' and is now actin' a bit different."

"Wait, Marth is adopted?" Ike asked in surprise. "I thought that he and Roy were legitimately brothers! I mean, they are pretty darn close! So, should we ask Marth if he remembered something? I mean, it would explain why he's acting weird!"

"Yeah, we can!" Link and Ike's attention were drawn by the sound of Marth leaving the house. They forced a smile as the bluenet approached them with a cheery grin.

"Are you guys ready?" Marth asked.

Ike and Link shot quick looks at each other, trying to not seem suspicious. "Yeah, we are." Link answered.

As the three began their trip to the pizza joint, Ike and Link allowed Marth, who did not seem to notice, to walk ahead of them. Once when Marth was a few steps away, the two began to shoot challenging looks at each other, trying to convince their blue-haired, or blond-haired friend to start a conversation to Marth. Though physically and mentally different, Ike and Link shared the same dilemma; they want to ask Marth why he was acting so strange. But, how should they approach him? They did not want to sound rude. Also, what if they cause Marth to panic internally?

"You ask him." Ike mouthed silently to Link.

"No, you do it!" Link responded wordlessly. *"You care about Marth more!"*

"Are you saying that you don't fucking care about him?!" Although Ike's voice never snapped into Link's sensitive ears, Link could still hear his dark, intimidating growl.

"Fine! I'll ask 'em!" Link retorted.

"Hey Marth, can we ask ya somethin'?" With a small gasp, Marth turned around to face Link.

"Y-Yes!" Marth replied cheerfully, his blue bangs falling into his matching eyes. He brushed his hair out of the way. "What is it?"

"Did ya remember anythin' yet?" Link asked calmly, hoping that he did not sound suspicious.

"Well..." Marth paused for a moment. Should he tell them?

"...Did you?" Link repeated.

"...No, I don't." Marth sighed sadly. "I can't remember anything. Why do you ask?"

"Link and I were just worried about you." Ike spoke up with a trustful smile. "We felt that there was something bothering you, so we thought that you happened to remember something."

"Darn it, Ike!" Link bit on his lips uneasily. *"Marth's gonna suspect something!"*

"T-Thank you for worrying about me, Ike and Link!" Marth just responded with a bubbly smile, his face flushing a lively red. "It makes me happy when you do so!"

Marth kept his blissful smile glued to his face, even as he and his friends entered the pizza joint. As he walked ahead and entered the kitchen, he heard Link say to Ike, "I don't see anythin' wrong with 'em. How 'bout you?"

"Nothing so far." Ike responded.

Marth's large, childish smile slowly morphed into a smaller, solemn smile. As he set his bag down and went to the sink to wash his hands, he looked at his distorted, curly reflection on the sink's narrow sprout. With a jesting smile considered immature for his age, he splashed the bubbly water at the reflection, mocking his dark self. As long as he kept his mask on, his past would fade into oblivion and he could finally have a peaceful life.

A few hours passed and Marth was on his thirty-minute break. Munching on a small cracker, he looked around, bored with nothing to do. He glanced in the kitchen and saw Link trying to flirt with Zelda, who seemed to not be amused by her boyfriend's actions. He then turned to the counter, where Ike was seated on a chair, hurriedly eating his chips and browsing on his phone. The larger bluenet was quickly eating his snack, trying to finish his lunch before his shift reassumes.

Neither of them seemed to have the time or attention to speak to Marth. With a tired sigh, Marth looked at the tables for any familiar faces. There were not a lot of people in the restaurant; the only people he saw were Fox and Falco. Being the rowdy teenagers they were, their voices were the only things heard in the room, other than the cars passing by outside.

With a shy smile, Marth quietly approached the two partners and waited for them to notice him. Luckily, Fox managed to notice him before becoming absorbed in a conversation with Falco.

"Hey, Marth!" Fox greeted, "Where were you a few days ago?"

Marth made his face flush, looking like he was not used to the sudden attention. "I was sick." he simply answered. Marth took notice of the laptop sitting in front of the two. "What you guys looking at?"

"Just an article about the most notorious people in the history of Smashburg." Falco said, strolling down. "Hey, look at number 5! Remember that guy?"

Fox and Marth looked at the laptop screen. While Fox seemed indifferent yet familiar with the person, Marth's cerulean eyes widened in disgust. His irises trembling slightly, Marth bit on his lips, trying to hide behind his mask.

"Oh yeah! The Masked Slasher!" Fox exclaimed. "The whole city was crazed over this guy."

"That guy attacked a lot of people from schools around our neighborhood!" Falco added. "Remember when school completely shut down for maybe a month?"

"Yep. It was that bad." Fox turned to Marth, as he heard the bluenet's soft whimpering. "What's wrong, Marth?"

"Nothing..." Marth thought of a lie. "It's just that this guy seems to be really scary..."

"Yeah! He attacked a few people we knew." Falco turned to Fox. "Remember Wolf?"

Fox scoffed carelessly. "Oh, one of my cousins. Yeah, I didn't really care when he died. He was kinda a jerk to us."

"I agree. Let's see if he's mentioned in this article."

"Okay." Fox quickly skimmed through the article. "Well, does 'several teenagers' count?"

"Kinda."

"Does the article have a picture of the Masked Slasher?" Fox asked curiously. "I wanna see how monsterous this killer looks!"

"...Nope." Falco said."Pretty weird how the Masked Slasher's identity was never revealed to the public, huh?"

"I know why..." Marth sadly thought to himself, recalling his parents.

"Yeah! I want to know how he looks like!" Falco responded. "I think he's really huge and bulky!"

"With crazy eyes! and—!"

Before Fox could finish his sentence, he was cut off by the sound of a door opening. "Hey! It's Roy and Pit!" he suddenly paused in jolt. "...Pit?"

On the angel's left cheek was a sore, red scratch mark. Suddenly concerned, Marth, Fox, and Falco immediately approached the two.

"What happened, Pit?" Marth asked, twiddling his fingers uneasily.

"Nothing happened..." Pit just answered in a monotone voice. "Nothing happened..."

"Well, I went to Pit's and—" Roy was interrupted by Pit's elbow slamming into his ribs.

Fox noticed the lifeless hue in Pit's dull, now-lavender eyes. "There's something wrong. What happened?"

"...She just hit me. That's all." Pit bluntly answered before breaking out of the circle. Looking unhappily at his friends for a few seconds, Roy shrugged his arms and followed the angel to a seat.

"What's up with Pit?" Falco asked Marth.

"I don't know..." Marth could only answer.

After hours of working, Marth found himself sitting on the Pherae's doorsteps. Although he usually went inside immediately to join Roy's company, Marth wanted to spend time alone. He needed solitude in other to think of a solution to his problems.

Although telling Ike and Link seemed to reassure the two that everything was fine, Marth sensed that the two were still suspicious. Yes, they told him that they were just worried due to his strange behavior. But, this told Marth that he *was* acting strange! He did not want to let his past leak out of the cup! He needed to hold in in and secretly drain everything away to the point he could not actually recall his past! In this way, he could finally life in his desired haven—free of worries, loneliness, and sadness.

However, just because Marth denied being the Masked Slasher did not mean society forgot about him. Like the article he read today and Fox and Falco, people still documented and recalled his infamous actions. Though, it was true that his identity was never revealed to the public. That meant that he could start his game all over again.

But, there were some people who actually witnessed or even survived his attacks. Marth recalled meeting Elice at the restaurant, remembering her remarking how familiar he seemed. Could there be a chance that she scarcely recognized him?

Noticing the accessory on his head, Marth reached up and gently took off the tiara, admiring its features. He still needed to return it to his sister. But how? He had not seen her recently.

Marth flipped the page to another problem: Pit. Pit was acting a bit funny recently. He declined hanging out with him and Roy until today. The scar on his cheek was a red flag to Marth. Something was happening in Pit's home! Could it be abuse? Recalling his first impression of Palutena, Marth denied that she had anything to do with this situation. She seemed kind; she does not have the black, cruel heart to hurt Pit!

But, it could be possible.

Wanting to validate his assumptions, Marth went across the street to Pit's house. He crept quietly across to driveway to one of its windows and took a small peek into the house. Although the window was covered by blinds, a tiny crack abled Marth to look into the house without being noticed.

Much to Marth's annoyance, the house was nearly dark. He could only see dark silhouettes of figures and furniture shadows. Refusing to leave, Marth changed his position, giving him a better angle and view inside the house.

At first glance, the house seemed to be normal. It was neat and the original furniture was still sitting in their usual positions. However, when Marth shifted his eyes, he caught a green-skinned stranger sitting in one of the couches.

Marth nearly jumped back in horror, as Cackletta was one of the ugliest women he had ever seen. Why was her skin so green? What was with her sense of fashion? Was that an odd, ugly hairstyle on her head? Or were their horns? Her presence answered one question though: Palutena was not present!

That meant Pit was alone in the house with her! But, where was he?! Marth scurried silently around the windows, trying to find Pit. Was he even inside the house?! As he darted around the yard, Marth accidentally stumbled over a large, clay pot. Though he landed on the cool, green grass with a small thud, Marth knew that the sound was close enough to be heard by that lady—whether she liked it or not.

A dark, loaning presence surrounded Marth as he hurried up to his feet and scurried across the street. Though he had no eyes on the back of his head, Marth's ears helped him see the grouchy lady slowly pull open the door and step out, her voice yelling vicious curses at him. The small vision could be a fragment of his imagination, though Marth was too terrified to look back and confirm.

Marth kept his eyes faced in front of him until he reached the Pherae's home. Panting hysterically for air as his lungs twisted and his stomach ached, Marth shakily turned around and watched Cackletta glare at him for a few moments before going back into the house. Unsteadily fumbling for the house key in his pockets, he began to wonder what was more disturbing: him staring face-to-face with that terrifying woman, or Pit being trapped in his own house with her.

Author's Notes: There once was a boy who always sucked his thumbs. His mother told him to stop, but he wouldn't. So she cut off his thumbs. Now he has no thumbs. Goodnight!

OT: Here's chapter 35. Despite being on break, I do have some homework, so sorry for the lack of quick updates! Also, I'm hoping that I'm not making the story go too fast or too slow.

Also, I opened a poll asking which fanfic should I start next. Please check it out!

Optional Story Questions:

Why do you think Palutena is gone?

(Definitely optional): Any suggestions on how should Marth's friends react when they discover that he was the Masked Slasher? I have ideas, but I am stuck on the fence.

Chapter 36: Chapter 36

Roy was casually watching TV when the sound of a door hurriedly opening and closing caught his attention. Looking over his shoulder, Roy saw Marth—whose face was as white as snow—unsteadily locking the door with his jittery hands. His hair messily covered his large, fearful cerulean orbs.

"Marth, are you ok?" Roy asked, raising an eyebrow. What could have happened?

Marth shakily faced Roy, brushed his hair out of his face, and gave him an uneven smile, trying to reassure the redhead that all was well. "Yes, everything is fine, Roy." Ye said, before walking towards the stairs.

Watching Marth head up the stairs, Roy continued watching TV, which showed his favorite murder mystery show. He did not care what Marth was up to as much as before.

Marth went into Roy's room, where he set his belongings underneath the desk littered with drawing supplies. He then went into the bathroom. After finishing his business, he went to wash his hands in the crystal clear water. As he rubbed the bubbly soap in his hands, he looked at the mirror.

Although it was unnoticeable, Marth noticed a tiny, blue bang out of its place. Rinsing his hands, he simply brushed the bundle of stray hair out of his face. To him, it was important to remain unchanged, as it was his sign that said that he was fine to his peers. He was not guilty of anything unlawful.

Although everything seemed to be the same at first glance, Marth noticed something that was off in his reflection—his parallel self and only approach to look at himself. What was it? The identical bluenet had the same hue and build as its master. What could be wrong? When Marth looked closer, he noticed that his reflection—which was now glaring grouchily back in annoyance—had drenched, wet hair, like if someone splashed him on accident. Marth took a towel and dried his hair, wondering how a single, tiny drop of water could have completely drenched his head.

Upon setting the towel back to its original position, Marth looked at the reflection again. To his astonishment, he still had wet hair. The only change he noticed was the young man at the other side of the mirror looked much more furious than before. His expression—lowered brows and narrowed, hateful eyes-vowed vengeance to unsuspecting victims. Marth started to feel nervous and looked closer at his reflection. What this real, or was he seeing things?

As Marth continued to stare at the mirror, the reflection seemed to gradually come closer and closer to his face. It was only when Marth bumped his nose against his alter ego's, meeting with the similar, yet threatening eyes. He was so close, in his reflection's pitch-black, dilated pupils, Marth saw his own shocked expression. With an alarmed yelp, Marth immediately backed away to safety, only to be halted by the bathroom's wall.

"You haven't won yet, Marth Lowell." Marth heard the dark voice say with a chuckle. He collapsed onto his knees and tightly covered his ears, desperate to muffle the sound. *"You cannot flee from who you are."*

"I... can!" Marth bluntly retorted, standing up and gazing back at his reflection, who only snickered at the futile resistance.

"You cannot run. You cannot run." The voice repeated.

Without replying, Marth tightened the pressure on his ears, attempting to ignore the voice. Despite his attempt, he could still clearly hear the voices whispering to him.

"You cannot run."

Marth shut his eyes tightly and turned his head away from the mirror.

"Do not deny. You cannot run."

After that statement, the voice suddenly silenced. His hands quivering from nervousness, Marth slowly opened his eyes, which wandered towards the mirror. His reflection was still there, only that it was dressed in a bloodstained, navy blue trench coat and his eyes—though covered by the secreting mask and barely seen—were dull and dead, nearly like his heart. Like an independent person, he moved on his own—looking at Marth with a dim smile, and reaching into his coat's large pocket.

"You cannot run." The reflection spoke, taking the blood-smeared dagger into his hands and pointing it to its master.

Startled, Marth yelled and back up, only to have his back slam against the wall. In his confusion, the tiara—an accessory that hung off his head by his thread-like, bundles of hair—slid off of his head and landed on the floor with a clunk. Taking

notice, Marth reached down and picked up the accessory, ignoring the reflection for a few moments. He looked back at the mirror and recognized his identical reflection: a typical, eighteen-year-old, young man that opposed the illusion of a psychotic, bloodthirsty killer.

"He disappeared..." Marth thought before looking at the tiara. *"Did he vanish forever?"*

Marth rubbed the tiara's sapphire with the sleeve of his shirt, wiping the smudged fingerprints off, and looked at his tiny, blue reflection. *"I still need to return this tiara to Elice... Once when I do so, will my past finally fade away?"* Walking out of the bathroom, Marth tightly clutched the fake crown in his shaking hands. *"I need to resist longer! I cannot give my identity away!"*

After leaving the bathroom, Marth returned to Roy's bedroom and set the tiara on the bed stand. He then changed out of his work clothes to casual clothes—which consisted of a sky-blue shirt, gray sweatpants, and white socks—and went downstairs, where Roy was still seated in front of the television.

Unlike his anemic self—who usually darted towards an empty space next to Roy and sat down immediately—Marth quietly approached Roy and stood still, waiting for the redhead to notice him. His attention focused on the television, Roy kept his eyes fixed on the flashing and filtered Marth's quiet footsteps with his ears. He failed to notice Marth.

After a few minutes, Marth finally spoke up. "...Woy."

"Eh?!" Roy turned around in surprise. "Marth!"

Marth smiled slightly as he went around the sofa and sat down next to Roy. "So, are you enjoying this murder mystery show?"

"Yeah, I am." Roy answered.

"What is the main focus of the show today?" Marth asked, setting his head softly on an oversized pillow.

"It's about this killer in Melee City who assaulted and murdered several women during the Masked Slasher." Roy answered.

"...Melee City?"

"It's close to Smashville. When the Masked Slasher struck, people actually thought the killer fled to Smashville to commit his crimes."

"...I see..." Marth simply said, looking down sadly. "Are you hungry, Woy?"

"A little bit. I'm trying to save my appetite for dinner."

"Maybe we can have something small, like popcorn." Marth suggested. "I can make a little bit."

"Feel free." Roy only said.

Marth nodded as he got up. Before he ran to the kitchen, he silently took a quick glance at Roy's facial expression. Although it was monotone, it gave Marth the impression that he was distant from him—not physically but mentally.

Hurrying to the kitchen, Marth took a small bag of popcorn kernel and set it in the microwave. He pressed the buttons that beeped annoyingly with every press, setting it for two minutes. As the microwave rumbled and the popcorn popped and sizzled, Marth poured some cherry-red fruit juice into two cups and carried them into the family room.

Roy's attention on the television averted to his phone, which chimed as an electronic message arrived at its destination: the mail. Brushing a cardinal bang out of his navy eyes, Roy reached for his phone on the table and turned it on, before skimming through the message from his father and quickly texting a reply.

Marth unobtrusively entered the family room with the drinks in his hand, making a small smile to reassure Roy. When he was a few steps away from his destination, he happened to glance at the television at the wrong time. His eyes enlarged in jolt and his skin paled fearfully as he stared dreadfully at the scene and recognized the bluenette.

Pasted on the television scene was his cousin—the same, identical cousin he stabbed in the eye several years ago—in a small interview on the show.

Though her azure hair was longer and slightly darker, and her left, wounded eye was covered by a bandage, Lucina still looked just as identical to him as ever. Zoning from reality for a few moments, Marth's head slowly turned to Roy, who

was still texting to his father. If Roy were to see Lucina, he would immediately know that she was connected to Marth somehow! Marth could not let him see her! At that moment, the microwave in the kitchen began to beep in alarm, followed by the sound of bangs.

Wait, what was behind Lucina? A dining table! And what was sitting on the dining table? A vase with ordinary yellow daisies! Hold on... Daisies? Marth instantly saw a vision of a single mother lying in a pool of blood in a shady garage, her daughter crushed underneath the broad garage door not too far from her. Distant from reality, Marth failed to feel the two cups slipping slowly out of his weakening grip.

SHATTER!

Jumping slightly at the sudden sound, Roy turned around and saw Marth frozen in front of the doorway of the kitchen, standing in a pool of blood-red punch. Fragments of fragile yet sharp glass surrounded him. The bluenet's large, soulless eyes were still on the television set.

"Hey Marth, what happened?" Roy asked, his voice full of shock yet suspicion. It must be Marth's antic again...

"Eh?" Marth glanced around his surroundings as his returned to reality. He gasped in revelation as he felt the icy cold, red liquid seeping into his socks. "Shoot! I must have dozed off!" he only answered. "I will clean it up, do not worry!"

"Marth, you gotta be really tired to do that." Roy remarked, heading towards Marth and missing the interview with Lucina in the meantime, making Marth sigh in relief. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing is wrong." Marth replied as he went into the kitchen, returning with a roll of paper towels. He began to carefully pick up the pieces of glass and wipe the floor.

"I heard you sigh." Roy bluntly retorted, crossing his arms, his face flushing red in irritation.

"I'm just exhausted." Marth said, completely missing Roy's first statement.

Roy facepalmed as Marth continued to clean the floor.

Once when Marth was finished, he and Roy continued to watch TV. As Roy munched greedily on the freshly-made, warm, buttery popcorn, Marth anxiously kept his eyes on the television, preparing to cover Roy's unsuspecting eyes when Lucina appeared again. Much to his relief, the television program continued without her.

"...So Woy? How is Pit?" Marth suddenly asked.

"He's fine, don't worry." Roy replied, swallowing the popcorn.

Sensing Roy's true emotion from the tone of his voice, Marth did not believe the redhead. "I do not think so. He seemed very unhappy today."

"Fine, fine." Roy signed. "He isn't doing well."

"Did something happen?" Marth asked. "Before I got home, I snuck to his home, took a peek inside, and saw a frightening, Beanish woman in his home. I could not find Mrs. Palutena."

"...Mrs. Palutena is gone on a small business trip. She'll be back in a few days." Roy only said.

Marth was beginning to lose his temper. "Woy, there is something that you are not telling me. I order you to tell me!"

Roy did not reply, earning a small slap on the cheek from the agitated bluenet. "What the fuck?! Marth!" he exclaimed angrily.

"I've seen this before." Marth growled. "Boy who is abused tells best friend what is happening and tells him not to tell anyone. Is this the case?"

Roy rubbed his core cheek. When did Marth became this stubborn? "You got me." He sighed in defeat. "Like I said before, Mrs. Palutena is gone on a business trip. Because she is single, she left Pit with one of the worst fucking babysitters ever: Cackletta."

"That Beanish woman?" Marth asked, his voice rising.

"Yep. I heard that she dislikes children and teenagers. However, she babysits them for a living. Guess she's too much of a bitch to get hired from real jobs."

"Does she abuse them?"

"From rumors, yes. She often loses her patience with children and hits them."

"Hits them?" Marth began to remember a certain tutor. *"Cia..."*

"Despite that, she manages to evade arrest with her stupid convincing stories." Roy shook his head sadly. "We can't tell the adults. Cackletta is pretty damn manipulative! She'll convince them that she isn't doing anything wrong!"

"Then we need to create a good excuse for Pit to leave that house temporary!" Marth stated, forming a plan. "I know! Does a sleepover sound well?"

"Maybe? I'm not sure if Pit can even get out of the house!" Roy remarked with a scoff.

"We can always try to convince that witch!" Marth encouraged. "If not, I'll try to sneak him out! Do you think we can do one tomorrow?"

"I can ask Mom and Dad." Roy said.

"Maybe we can convince the others to come!" Marth added. "That should protect Pit from that witch!"

"Ok, we can try! I'll start asking the others!" Roy said, beginning to text to Link.

As Roy sent a message, Marth looked up and saw another interview with Lucina on the television. His face resembling a deer in front of headlights, Marth instantly grabbed the remote control (which was seated next to him), changed the channel, and set the remote underneath his legs, making it look like he switched the shows on accident.

Roy browsed through his text messages as he left the bathroom, entering his pitch-black bedroom. According to his messages, Ike said he could come, while Link claimed that he was unsure.

Careful not to step on Marth, who was asleep in his bag, Roy silently crept towards the window. He peaked through the binds and look at Pit's house.

Although its window was pitch-black like most of the other houses (One of Ike's windows glowed orange.), Roy knew that anything could be happening in that home. Pit might be sleeping peacefully in his bed, or facing Cackletta's horrid wrath. He began to wonder why people like the Beanish existed. They all had a childhood, like him. It was not perfect like his, but they should take the chance to improve themselves, despite the situation. For instance, although he was depressed at the beginning of the summer, he made a fast recovery thanks to Marth's arrival in his life.

Roy looked at the sleeping bluenet and shrugged with a confused smile. Marth was behaving differently. Despite how cold and mature he seemed to be, Roy still saw him as an innocent, amnesic person with a mysterious past. In order to be that pure, he must have had a perfect childhood.

Glancing at Pit's home one more time, Roy turned and got into his bed. As he pulled the overs over his body and shut his eyes, he heard a low chuckle.

"The hell?" Roy opened a single eyelid.

"...Nobody's going to learn."

"M-Marth?" Roy turned and faced Marth, who was still asleep. "Is he talking in his sleep."

If the lights were on, Roy would have seen Marth's smirk. "They will never know... They should not know! I need to keep my mask on..."

Marth turned, his grin falling into a terrified expression. "N-No..." he whispered, clutching his bedsheets with a deathly grip. "Cia... Leave Pit alone..."

Roy trembled. Even though Marth was innocent, that did not mean something could not happen to him. There was something wrong with Marth.

Author's Notes: Currently addicted to funny GTA V videos...

Sorry for the REALLY late update. I got carried away with schoolwork and studying again. Also, I kinda got writer's

block, so this is pretty much why this chapter is really short. However, the next chapters should come along pretty easy, as I actually know what is going to happen for once!

Important tests are coming up, so I might be on a small hiatus! So please be patient!

PS: Check out my poll!

Optional Story Questions:

(Definitely optional) What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter?

(Most definitely optional) I currently got an animation program. Do you guys think I should continue with the webomic, or make small gifs of the scenes with the program?

Chapter 37: Chapter 37

The next day was a gloomy, rainy day, creating not the best mood for a sleepover. To Marth, it nearly resembled the beginning scene of a horror movie: teenagers gather together to have a fun, innocent sleepover. Unbeknownst to them, a crazed, serial killer follows their moments and snatches them away one by one. The only main difference was, one of their friends was the killer, not a stranger.

Changed into a fresh set of casual clothes out of his soaked, work clothes, Marth peered out of the window and watched the rainy scene. He glanced at Ike's home before turning to Pit's residence, which looked as lonely and dark as before. The windows were either completely black or covered by blinds, and an old fashioned automobile parked on the driveway. It was clarified that Ike and (maybe) Link were coming, or at least have a higher chance of going. Their lives were ran by parents, not a tyrannical babysitter.

Marth signed softly to himself. According to Roy, Pit had not responded to his texts yet, large, waving red flags to the two. Although the two argued whether Pit had his phone taken away from the Beanish witch or had it fatally broken by her, both of them agreed that Pit would not be able to come by either way. Being just a human, Marth could not see through walls and view Pit's current state. That did not limit his imagination, though. He could see the angel weakly cowering in a lonely corner, intimidated by Cackletta's presence.

Like a certain, little blue-haired boy.

Yes, Marth was not Pit. Therefore, he could not truly know how he was feeling in his current situation. He was obviously Marth, not Pit. Yet, he could always picture himself in the same situation or relate to him.

Loneliness, fear, and helplessness: the basic emotions Marth assumed Pit felt at the current moment. Ever since he was aware of the world, Marth always felt those emotions when trapped in the cage created by his family, society, and eventually the asylum. Blocked by the iron bars, he could only desperately reach out for help and pray that someone would let him out. Though this worked at first, as time passed, his guards enforced stricter rules upon themselves.

If there was a way to free Pit, Marth would do it in a heartbeat! What could he do? Maybe he could try to convince Cackletta to let Pit go! At that thought, Marth remember the Bean's terrifying, menacing appearance and Roy's description of her personality. No, she probably would not allow Pit to go, let alone listen to Marth in the first place. Maybe he could break Pit out of the house! But, how should he do it? Break a window? Being a person trying to erase his true identity, Marth wanted to find a moral way.

DING!

Marth jumped at the sudden ring of the doorbell. As he heard Roy hurry to get the door downstairs, Marth glanced at the clock on the bed stand. It read: 8:00, the moment when the sleepover started.

"Hey, Ike! Hey, Link!" Marth heard Roy exclaim as the two friends entered.

"'Sup, Roy!" Ike replied, setting down his belongings on the ground.

"Let's get this started!" Link cheerfully spoke. "Where can we put our stuff?"

"Well, where do you guys want to sleep?" Roy asked. "Downstairs? Upstairs?"

"Let's see how big your room is first! Then we'll decide!"

Stepping into the hallway, Marth approached the stairs and saw Ike and Link, who were carrying their belongings, carefully strolled up the staircase. "Hello, Ike and Link!" he greeted.

"Hey, Marth!" Ike responded.

Link gave the bluenet a welcoming nod and a quick smile.

"I think there is enough room." Marth said as Link and Ike entered Roy's room.

"Yep, looks like it! I call the window!" Link shouted as he hurried towards the empty space and immediately dropped his belongings.

"Heyy!" Ike yelled, his eyes flashing with annoyance. "Link, can we share this spot? I don't want to sleep next to that creepy closet!"

"Ohh! Ike's afraid of the monster in the closet!" Link teased.

"Listen, being dragged into the closet by a darn monster is the stupidest way to die!" Ike retorted in comical anger.

"I don't think ya can fit in that closet!" Link rudely remarked. "The monster would try to drag off Roy or Marth!"

"Or you." Ike gave Link a mischievous grin, which made the Hylian's face flush red.

"I'm not that short! I think I'm a little taller than Marth!"

"Yeah, right. Let's proof that now! Hey Marth, stand back-to-back to Link!" Ike ordered the bluenet, who stood by Roy's side, watching the conversation.

With a nod, Marth went to Link and stood back-to-back to him.

Ike took a close look at the two teens. "Hey Roy, what do you think?"

Roy walked up and took a careful glance at Marth and Link. "I think Marth's taller."

"What?!" Link exclaimed in shock, causing Marth to laugh. "How?! I've seen Marth next to me a few times! I could've sworn that I was a little taller!"

"I think it's your hair. It's puffy and stands up." Roy said. "Unlike Marth's."

"Maybe you should sleep next to the Link." Ike spoke up naughtily, trying to hold in his laughter. "For the best."

"Hey, at least I'm not that shortest!" Link countered, taking a quick look at Roy.

"Hey! I'm taller than Pit!" Roy exclaimed. It was his turn to be angry.

"Are you suuuure?" Link gave Roy a smug look.

"Well, m-maybe..." Roy's voice was unsure. "But, we can prove it! Right, Pit?!"

There was a moment of silence.

"...Did Pit ever respond to your messages?" Marth asked, breaking the silence.

"...No, he didn't." Roy sighed sadly, causing Marth to look down in grief.

"Maybe he's busy." Link suggested, trying to calm his friends.

"Or stuck in the house with that ugly bitch." Ike bluntly added.

Link elbowed Ike in the rips, giving him a stern look. "Language!" he whispered, directing his gaze at Marth.

"Well, I can send him a message and we can wait for him to respond." Roy said, taking his phone out of his pocket. "If he doesn't reply in like thirty minutes, we can check on him. Sounds good?"

"All right!" Ike replied as Link nodded and Roy quickly sent a message.

Marth was a bit shocked and disgusted. To him, his friends did not seem concerned with Pit's situation. Why were they not in a hurry to help him?! He was trapped in his own home with an abusive stranger with no means of communication!

Just like Marth himself. It was obvious that he was hurt, but no one bothered to reach for his hand and pull him away to safety.

"...Marth? What's wrong?" Ike asked, giving the shorter bluenet a concerned expression. "You don't look happy..."

"Oh!" Marth gasped, his face turning pink. "I was thinking about something!"

"What are you thinking about?" Ike nosily asked.

"Hey, Ike! Don't be snoopin' into people's business!" Link responded. Marth smiled in the inside; it was like Link was reading his mind.

"Okay, okay!" Ike replied, raising his hands out.

"So, what should we do in the meantime?" Roy asked, trying to shift the subject.

"I feel like makin' some art." Link answered. "Don't ask me why. I feel like it."

"I brought some mask templates." Ike spoke up. "Maybe we can create our own masks!"

"I'm up for it! I'm interested!" Roy said.

"I'm in!" Link returned.

As memories began to drift into his thoughts, Marth just nodded. *"Don't reveal anything. Don't reveal anything..."*

While Ike took the templates out of his bag, Roy brought out his art supplies. Once when all of the required materials were gathered, the four began creating their artistic personas. As Roy looked at his phone for art references, Link sketched an outline on his phone, and Ike experimented with markers, Marth just blankly looked at the plain, white template, gently rubbed its smooth surface, and frowned. Even something similar to a concealing mask reminded him of the sins he committed years ago.

"Marth? You all right?" Ike asked, looking up from his work.

Marth jumped. "Y-Yes!"

"Hey, stop worrin' about Marth so much!" Link hissed.

"Fine, fine!" Ike whispered, looking away in shame.

Thirty minutes felt like thirty minutes. If one was occupied with work though, thirty minutes felt like ten minutes. At least that how it felt for Link, Ike, and Roy, however. After lifelessly gazing at the template for what seemed to be an eternity, Marth took a navy-blue marker and began to color the blank mask, ignoring the thoughts that flew into his head.

"Hey, what do you think of mines?" Ike asked, showing his mask to his friends. It resembled a cartoonish, funny face.

Roy laughed. "I like it!"

"Hey! You copied me!" Link held up his mask. It was heart shaped with a pair of menacing eyes and bright, colorful patterns.

"That's scary! I definitely didn't copy you!" Ike replied with a chuckle.

Wanting to join the conversation, Marth spoke up. "Does the color match my hair?" he asked, covering his face with his mask.

Although he was calm at first, a jolt of horror struck Link as he took a glance at Marth, causing him to freeze in his position. His normally-cool, azure eyes widened as his skin paled, the color resembling the plain surface of a template. There was something horrifying about Marth. But, what was it? Marth never did anything cruel to him, unless if one counted the time he lightly pinched his eyes out of curiousity.

"Link? What happened?" Roy asked, noticing the blond's frightened expression.

"I... Um... Marth! I thought your face disappeared!" Link stammered nervously, laughing in effort to relief himself. "That color really matched you!"

"Wow, Link." Ike sarcastically said with a haughty tone. "You made a scary mask, yet you're scared of a faceless Marth!"

"I blame the Internet!" Link retorted, grinding his teeth in annoyance. "While that suit-wearing monster can appear anywhere, I at least know that this mask won't hurt me!"

"Are you sure it won't turn you into a maniac who wants to destroy the world in three days?" Roy added, trying to tease Link.

"No way!"

As his friends began to bicker, Marth noticed Roy's phone sitting next to him. Its screen was black in sleep. Ignoring the conversation, Marth tried to remember the last time he heard the phone ring.

He failed to recall. Pit probably could not reply, thanks to Cackletta.

"Pit hasn't replied yet." Marth quietly spoke up. "Should we check on him?"

No response. Roy, Link, and Ike were lost in their conversation. Without another word, Marth rose, left Roy's room, and left the house. As he stepped outside, a powerful breeze whipped in his face, making him clutch his jacket for warmth. Through the sky was nearly pitched black—with a hint of navy-blue—Marth could barely see loaming, murky clouds covering the illuminating moon, the natural source of light.

"Looks like a storm is coming..." Marth said to himself as he crossed the street to Pit's home.

Twisting the door handle—which did not budge a bit—Marth lightly bit his lips in frustration. What was he thinking?! Of course the front door would be locked!

There must be another way. Looking at the fence that barricaded the backyard, Marth stealthily climbed over the wooden structure and crept towards the porch. He was quite wary of his steps, as the ground was littered with crunchy, dry sticks, protruding flowerpots, and tiles that formed an uneven pathway. Though he was nervous, Marth made no effort to relieve his anxiety. To him, breathing through the mouth was too loud and noticeable.

Marth's heart thumped hysterically as he cautiously approached the porch. Keeping an eye out for spying eyes, he kneeled behind a large flowerpot and looked into the house through the glass sliding door.

"It's awfully quiet..." Marth said to himself. The only noise he could hear was the sound of the wind rustling through the tiny orange tree.

"No, stop!"

Marth's gasped as his eyes darted to the source of the muffled noise. He saw Pit running panicky into the family room, white feathers clouding the room hysterically. Following him was Cackletta, her face purple with rage and his dress stained with warm, spilled tea. Clutched in her right, monstrous hand was a belt.

If Marth ate something before sneaking into Pit's home, he would have thrown up. Raw, purple bruises stained his innocent, pale skin and inflamed scratches plagued his face, which stung as tears rolled down his face. Black circles tainted the area surrounding his eyes, noting that the traumatized angel had not gotten enough sleep.

"How dare you spill that tea!" Marth heard Cackletta shriek furiously, cornering Pit.

"I'm sorry! Don't hurt me, please!" Pit desperately begged, not noticing the tears dripping onto his dirty jeans.

"What is your excuse?!" Cackletta harshly asked, before striking Pit violently with the belt, earning a pained cry from the youth.

"I-I... I tripped over... something." Pit whispered hoarsely.

"Were your eyes open?!" Cackletta retorted, swinging the belt at Pit again, its buckle striking him on the chin. "Do you need to practice looking?!"

"You need to be alert! You did not practice!" Marth cringed at Cackletta's words, a renewed fury boiling in his heart. He looked at Cackletta again, the belt being replaced by a long whip.

"...It hurts..." Pit managed to barely whimper.

Cackletta laughed, an evil, heartless laugh. "Too bad...!"

"Crack!"

"Keep it in..."

Snap!

"Do you not want to achieve utopian world?"

Anger rushing through his veins, Marth glared at Cackletta. Instead of seeing an old, Beanish women, he spotted a certain, white-haired tutor.

"Do you not want to erase all traces of your past?"

Marth's eyes moved to Pit, who shared the appearance of a helpless, little, blue-haired boy.

CRACK!

The abrupt shatter of glass froze time itself. With a startled gasp, Cackletta turned around and was met with a flying tile in the stomach. Followed by the blunt projectile was a certain bluenet.

"Leave... him... ALONE!" Marth screamed lividly, his azure eyes blazing with fire as he grabbed Cackletta by the collar of her dress and flung her at the wall, away from Pit. The belt in her hand flew out of her grasp and landed in front of Pit.

"Marth?! Marth!" Pit shrieked, frozen in fear as her watched Marth take the belt and strike his babysitter with it. "MARTH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! MARTH!"

Marth did not hear Pit. Submerged in the sea of rage, nothing could not pull him out. Pit's horrified, alarmed shouts were muffled by the rumbling, violent waves that washed over the enraged bluenet, who began to hit the abusive Cackletta. The once daunting, heartless witch—who cursed every adolescent and slipped away from justice—helplessly shielded herself from a potential prey, also called a teenager. Her moment was a tetherball; what went around came around.

"How dare you set a hand on him, you bitch!" Marth shouted, the iris in his eyes large with pure hatred.

"Y-You...!" Cackletta started in pain, only to be cut off by a belt in the face.

"You can hit, scold, and abuse me as much as you want!" Marth continued, endlessly beating the Beanish elder. "But you can NEVER HARM PIT, CIA!"

"Marth, what are you doing?!" Pit screamed, covering his eyes. "Please, STOP! STOP!"

"Hey guys?" Ike spoke up, looking up from his work.

"Yeah? What is it?" Roy asked.

"Where's Marth?"

The three friends looked around Roy's room for signs of the bluenet, who seemed to have vanished in thin air. Strange... Marth was here a few moments ago. Where did he go? The three were so focused in their projects, they did not notice his departure...

"Maybe he went downstairs to get somethin' to eat!" Link suggested.

Link's hypothesis was proven wrong with the sound of the front door opening and closing. Two series of footsteps—one thundering with jury and another soft and jittery—entered the house.

"I think your 'rents are back." Link spoke.

Roy went to the window and took a peek out. Looking at the gloomy weather—looming thunder that shook the world and rain that pattered on the asphalt ground. "No, I don't see their car."

Booming footsteps, which resembled the thunder's powerful boom, was what caused the three teens to jump and turn to the source of the sound. Standing in front of the doorway was Marth with Pit standing shakily behind him, wearing Marth's drenched jacket. Marth's monstrous appearance—resembling a fabled Arecus preparing to cast his judgement—struck fear directly in his close friends; even Ike flinched at the glare Marth gave to him. His hair, mattered by the rain and wind, covered his lowered, gazing eyes. He nearly resembled a menacing Gyarados whose territory was disturbed by pathetic, foolish humans.

"Marth! Where did you go?!" Roy asked, approaching Marth.

Marth jeered coldly and gently pushed Pit—who was still trembling from fear—into the room. "While you three were enjoying yourselves, I decided to check on Pit, who was experiencing a less pleasing moment. As you can see, he is here now. You all may resume your amusement."

"Wait, what happened?!" Roy asked as alarms began to blare. "What did you do?!"

Marth did not answer.

"Marth!"

"...I beat her."

"...What do you mean?"

"I saved Pit from the Beanish witch occupying his home." Marth darkly spoke. "I beat her."

Author's Notes: I finally managed to write a decent chapter...

Well, I managed to give myself some extra time, despite how busy I am. I'm just trying to make up for the late updates. However, I feel that I may be busier in the future, so don't be too surprised!

Optional Story Questions:

Do you think Marth's actions is justifiable this time?

(Definitely optional): I'm having trouble reintroducing the villains in this story. Any ideas?

Chapter 38: Chapter 38

A/N: Trigger warning!

What started off as a fun evening escalated into a severe nightmare for the boys. At first, Roy did not believe Marth, even with the shaken Pit by his side. Why would someone like him hit an old lady? Yes, she was a nasty person, but that did not give anyone the privilege to hurt her! Through, his denial was proven wrong when Marth led him and his friends to Pit's home, over the fence that led to the abandoned, desolate backyard, through the shattered sliding door, into the dark room. Lying in the middle of the room was the barely conscious Cackletta.

The sight of seeing the cruel Bean on the floor spurred some debate. Should they report her to the police for abusing Pit, or should they report Marth to the police for attacking her? Through possibly controversial, the decision was quickly made, thanks to Pit's persuasion and Ike's reasoning.

Seeing the police take Cackletta—stunned yet not gravely injured, and handcuffed—was like ingesting a candy-flavored medicine. It was relieving to see the witch finally get what was coming for her, yet this stirred some problems. Would she convince the police that Marth was a stranger that unexpected attacked her? How would Palutena respond to this? Could Pit justify Marth's actions? Where would Pit stay, now with Cackletta out of the picture?

"Damn it, how am I supposed to tell Mom and Dad about this..." Roy could only say as he and his friends returned to Roy's house.

"I think they'll understand." Link said. "If they say Pit can't stay over, I'll ask my 'rents."

Marth just stayed in silence; pure, bitter silence.

Ike heard Pit's frustrated sigh and turned around. "Hey Pit, what's wrong?"

"Nothing... I just feel tired." Pit sighed with a feeble smile.

"It's all right." Link calmed. "She's gone now. The green witch is gone."

"Of course you are tired!" Marth suddenly spoke angrily, giving his friends a glare as he entered the house. Link and Ike followed, stunned by the bluenet's sudden anger. "If I was like your foolish friends dillydallying carelessly you would have been out cold by now!"

"...Marth?!" Ike exclaimed, shutting the door.

Finally letting it spill out, Marth directed the red sensor on Roy. This was it. He finally pressed the button. "Roy, are you not friends with Pit?!"

"Yeah!" Roy replied in shock. "What's wrong, Marth?!"

"You're the problem!" Marth rattled crossly, his normally-calm eyes blazing in flames. "If you were truly friends with Pit, would you not check on him?! Tell the others what was wrong?! Try to get help?! Try to make his situation better?!"

"Pit told me to not tell anyone! Besides, I told you Pit's problem anyway!" Roy argued back, his voice mixed with disbelief and anger.

"Excuses! Excuses!" Marth threw up his hands in disgust. "You remind me of my biological family: heartless people who would care less about other's wellbeing!"

"Biological family?" Link whispered, watching his two friends argue.

Marth turned to Ike and Link continued his violent rambling. "Even with a dreadful monster known as Cia torturing me within my own house, no one spared me a helping hand. No one helped me up. No one reassured me. This society is a pathetic, cowardly, and selfish being that only considers itself in the picture, which is why I strained my hands in blood in attempt to rid it."

"Marth, get a grip on yourself!" Roy shouted, grabbing ahold of Marth's jacket and jerking him closer, so they looked eye-to-eye. "What are you talking about? What do you mean, 'biological family'? Who's Cia?"

Marth only glowered at Roy with his sharp, blue, hawk's eyes.

"You've been acting weird lately." Roy continued. "Why?"

Instead of answering, Marth continued to look at Roy, his frightening glare softening as he came to the realization that he could not hide anymore.

"Marth? Did you remember something? Is there anything you're not telling us?"

Marth still did not answer as Roy released his grip, allowing him to step back. Ike, Link, and Pit could only look, not knowing what to do. Which would help the situation: staying silent or speaking up?

"...Marth?"

"..." After hesitating for a few moments, Marth opened his mouth, an unfamiliar sound jittery tumbling out. "...Roy..."

"W-What?" Roy could only respond. This was the first time Marth called him by his actual name. "Marth? Who are you? Are you Marth?"

Marth chuckled uneasily, trying to filter the tension out of the air. "I'm afraid that I cannot run anymore. The truth is, I did remember my past. Every last bit of it."

"Well?! Then why were you hiding it from us?"

"If I were to tell all of you the dark, tragic past of me, Marth Lowell, every one of you will never look at me the same again." Marth explained with a sad smile. "Sadly, my storybook isn't as cheery and bubbly as you assume it would be."

Ike finally spoke up. "Go on, Marth. Tell us." He urged. "We won't hate you."

At that moment, Marth finally poured his contents into his friends' cups. He explained who his family was and the strict mold they tried to squeeze him into. He described his life at the harsh private school and how friendless and lonely he was. He marked the moment when he finally broke and turned into the Masked Slasher, and the crimes he committed out of pure anger and revenge. Lastly, he ended his story by elaborating the moment when he was finally captured by the facility, the pain, isolation, and suffering he went through in the facility's stone walls, and his escape years later.

"...And, here I am." Marth ended, looking up at his friends with a sad gleam in his eyes. "Here am I, explaining to you four about the misery I faced in my life." He noticed the identical, stunned expression on his friends' faces. "Do you believe me?"

While Roy and Pit looked at each other, Ike looked at the ground as he shakily took a few steps back. He did not feel safe anymore.

"No, no. I don't! I aint gonna believe ya!" Link shook his head, constantly disbelieving the bluenet's heartbreaking backstory.

"...Link. You and your little brother were adopted, am I right?" Marth asked as he began to head up the stairs, earning a nod from the Hylian. "Maybe this can convince you."

After disappearing upstairs for a minute, Marth returned with Elice's tiara and the blue mask he created. He looked at Link and noticed his face slowly turning white in uneasiness. Watching Marth, Link repeatedly told himself, *"Calm down! It's Marth! It's just Marth!"*

Marth set the tiara onto his head. "Do you recognize me, Link?" he asked as he hid his facial features with the mask.

Traumatizing memories began to swarm into Link's head. "No. It can't be! It just can't!" he protested, clutching his fists.

"...I'm sorry Link." Marth could only say as he watched the blond lust for revenge. "Forgive me..."

"You..." Link clenched his teeth before abruptly lunging at the blue-haired teen. "YOU BASTURD!" he shrieked as he tackled Marth to the ground.

"Link!" Ike exclaimed, hurrying to the scene.

"I HATE YOU!" Link yelled lividly as he violently shook Marth by the shoulders and gave him a punch in the face. "You were the one who ruined Toon's and my life! What were you doing?! Pretending to be amnesic so you can get me and hurt Toon once again?! I hate you! HATE YOU!"

"LINK! Stop it!" Ike yanked Link off Marth, making the Hylian direct his anger towards him. "Didn't we say we will not hate

Marth for telling the damn truth?!"

"You said it! I didn't fucking say anythin'!" Link retorted. "This man murdered my parents! I can never forgive 'em for his actions!"

"Marth is not the same!"

"What do you mean?" Link sneered. "Do you mean that he's not the same when you first met 'em, or his past self?!"

"Well, his actions aren't acceptable, but..." At that moment, Marth stopped listening to Ike and Link and turned to Roy and Pit.

"R-Roy..." he said, his eyes full of mental pain. His plea was replied with Roy turning his back on him. "Roy?"

"You're not Marth." Was Roy's harsh reply.

"Roy," Pit started worriedly. "Marth wants to talk to you."

Roy suddenly snapped. "Pit, I don't know this guy in my house!" he pointed to Marth, not noticing the hurt swelling and stretching painfully on his face. "This is not Marth! Marth's silly but kind! Marth always calls me 'Woy'! He does not fucking kill innocent people! Even though his life sucked ass, that doesn't give him the excuse to kill people!"

"But he protected me! Marth's not a crazy killer!" Pit tried to reason with Roy.

"Well, if you weren't in the picture, he would've killed Cackletta! In fact, I'll bet with enough time and manipulation, he would've killed us!"

That was when Marth ran.

He did not care when he knocked Roy over when he ran to the door. He did not care when the rain poured onto him as he ran out of the house onto the street. He did not care when he accidentally ran in front of Eliwood's car when it made a turn to the driveway. He did not care when he heard Eliwood get out of his vehicle and call his name.

Why should it matter? He was free, but why did it hurt? Marth wondered as tears—which could be mistaken for raindrops—rolled down his face.

"How long had we been sitting here?" Ghirahim asked as he sat in his van—which was parked in a dark alleyway—with his partner Ganondorf.

Ganondorf looked at his expensive gold watch. "According to this watch, about five hours."

Ghirahim signed in frustration and flipped his silvery hair. "Geez. Why can't we nab another boy that looks like him? There are hundreds of little blue-haired boys in this city!"

Just as when Ghirahim said his sentence, Marth suddenly dashed by the van, his soaked bangs whipping into his face and his drenched shoes splashing in the growing puddles. Although he was a thunderbolt that zipped by in a blink of an eye, Ghirahim and Ganondorf managed to correctly identify the bluenet.

"Alert the others. Alert the others now!" Ghirahim screeched irritably to Ganondorf who scrambled to find the radio.

Panting softly, Marth weakly looked around as he slowed his pace. His hands trembled as he wrapped his shivering arms around himself in a futile attempt to keep warm. Rainwater poured over his matted, blue hair and slip down his jacket, which could not absorb any more water. His tennis shoes were completely filled with water, making a disgusting squishing noise as Marth shakily walked down the street.

Since it was freezing cold, Marth wanted to go back home. But deep inside, he knew that it was not a wise thing to do. His friends probably hated him for committing those violent acts—for telling the truth. Roy probably told his parents about everything. If Marth ever returned to the Pherae's house, he might be refused entry, or worse: sent to the asylum.

Marth was now free; he did not need to hide anymore. But, where should he go? He needed to find shelter, as he may catch the flu in this kind of weather or snatched by the asylum's workers.

He did not know. Marth was lost.

His heart painfully pounding with sorrow and abandonment, Marth continued to wander through the streets, his upset eyes staring at the ground. Through it was night, people were still getting off work. Safe in their warm cars, they gave the somber bluenet weird looks. Who was this young man? Why was he out in a time like this?

A splash caused by a car quickly driving through a puddle was what made Marth finally look up. His eyes lit up as he recognized the neighborhood.

Home...

His frozen hands reached to his head and felt the tiara.

Elice...

With determination flickering in his nearly-hopeless eyes, Marth hurried down the streets, towards a certain, mansion-like home.

I still need to return it...

Marth swallowed nervously as he approached the house's doorstep and shakily took the hair accessory off his head. Were his parents here? Marth looked at the driveway. Their car was not there... Wait, was Elice even here? Marth's eyes caught the warm, orange light sweeping from the shut window blinds. She must be...

Before ringing the doorbell, Marth tidied his damp hair and zipped his jacket. He hated to have Elice see him like this, though he did not want to miss the opportunity. Biting his lips in nervousness, Marths' index finger gradually went closer to the tiny, white button next to the door...

And gently pressed it.

"Please be home... Please be home." Marth nervously thought to himself as he looked down anxiously and the door opened.

"Hello?" Marth's sighed softly in relief when he heard his older sister's familiar voice. "Oh?"

Marth timidly looked up at his sister. "I... Um..." he unsurely started.

"You're... You're the waiter from the restaurant." Elice spoke. "How did you—?"

Shakily wildly in nervousness, Marth's face turned red in embarrassment as he held the tiara to Elice. "I-I! Y-You left this at the joint a week again!" he said, feeling disordered. "I want to give this back to you! S-Someone at the restaurant who knew you told me w-where you lived! I-I'm sorry!"

Elice smiled kindly and took the tiara from Marth. "Don't be sorry! Thank you very much!"

"You are welcome." Marth turned. He wanted to leave before his parents returned.

"Wait, where are you going?" Elice suddenly asked.

Marth forced a smile. "I'm going... home! Yes, home!"

"Do you want to wait for the rain to stop? You look awfully cold..."

The male bluenet looked at the sky. Although he was about to say "No.", the sudden thunder rumbling through the sky convinced him to change his mind. "S-Sure..."

Marth softly whimpered as Elice gently dried his hair with a fresh, warm towel. His fists tightly grabbed ahold the blankets that wrapped around his shivering body. Running the towel through the male's hair, Elice chuckled at the small noise.

"Did I do something funny?" Marth asked as Elice took the towel off his head.

"No, you didn't." Elice answered with a sweet smile. "You just remind me of my little brother."

Marth tried not to give Elice a gloomy face. "Your younger brother?"

"Yes." Elice set the towel on the coffee table. "He was the sweetest little brother one can have. Was."

Marth painfully flinched at Elice emphasis on the word "Was". Noticing her sad expression, he tried to change the mood. "Well, it was very kind for you to let me stay here for the moment. I appreciate it."

Elice blushed slightly. "Thank you."

"I ask you, why would you offer a random stranger you only met once hospitality?"

"For behalf of my younger brother." Elice answered. "He inspired me to be kind to others, even though some do not repay the favor."

"How was he?"

"He was one of the kindest people I have ever known." Elice began. "He always tried to help others, including me. Though, he was a bit shy. I blame my father."

"Is he still here?" Marth dared to ask.

"No." Elice sighed sadly. "Sadly as time passed, I failed to be a good older sister. As father forced expectations onto him, he had no one to turn to for comfort. And one day, he..."

Marth raised his hand to stop Elice, as he could tell that she could not say it. "It's fine. You don't need to tell me the details. To change the mood, I have an older sister."

"How is she?"

"Excuse my improper language, but she is the bestest older sister someone can have! She can light a dark room when she entered." Marth smiled as he eyes moved to the trophy case. "She is also talented and intelligent!"

"That is nice. Oh, sorry to be rude, but what is your name?"

Marth paused and guiltily looked down.

"Is something wrong?" Elice asked, failing to recognize the young man sitting in front of her.

"First, can you recognize me?" Marth requested. "Do I look like someone you knew in the past?"

"Other than resembling my brother, no."

"...You don't recognize me, Elice?" Marth quietly asked, brushing the sheets away and standing up. "May I barrow your tiara?"

"You may." When Elice gave Marth the tiara, Marth set the headpiece onto his head. "Do you have a picture of your brother?"

"Yes, I do." Elice answered before heading up the stairs to her room. "Hold on, I hid it. Dad does not quite enjoy looking at him. It brings back terrible memories."

Marth unhappily looked down at the floor as he recalled his father, though he quickly looked up when Elice returned with a picture of a small, blue-haired boy at the age of eleven in his hands. The boy was seated against a tree on a sunny, warm day. He was dressed in a long-sleeved, white dress shirt, a light-blue tie, black trousers, and shiny black shoes. Through, his appearance—mainly his timid yet large smile—gave the appearance of a boy who seemed to have it all, Marth knew the misery he tried to hide behind his facial mask. He knew the story of Cornelius Lowell scolding his son harshly for not smiling "correctly" several times before the picture was finally taken.

"Here it is." Elice handed Marth the picture. "What are you doing to do with it?"

"Here it goes..." Marth thought to himself as he placed the picture next to his head. "Elice, now do I look familiar?"

It took a few moments for Elice to finally notice the similarity. "You..."

The azure hair, the cerulean eyes, the way the tiara sat on his head... It couldn't be. Her brother was locked away in the asylum! It could not be possible for him to escape!

"Elice, it's me. Your brother, Marth." Marth smiled warmly.

"Oh, Marth!" Elice cried out in joy, wrapping her arms around her long-lost younger brother. Marth squeaked in surprise at

the sudden embrace. "Marth!" Tears of happiness began to fill her eyes. "I'm... I'm so sorry! Forgive me for being an awful sister!"

"Elice..." Marth hugged his sister back and rested his chin on her shoulder. He was still shorter than her. "You weren't an awful sister." He reassured. "I forgive you."

The rain pattered violently on the windows as Elice and Marth released each other from their embrace.

"Well, the rain hasn't stopped, so you'll be here for a while. Can you tell me how you escaped? What happened?" Elice asked.

Marth nodded. However, as he opened his mouth to begin his tale, the front door suddenly flew open as lightning flashed across the sky, illuminating two figures—a blue-haired man and woman—entering the home.

Author's Notes: Ishouldbestudyingnowbutnah.

Here's chapter 38! I managed to gain some free time, so here's this chapter! Testing technically begins in two weeks, so I may or may not be updating along with my dA account. (dA is definite. I've been pretty lazy in uploading drawings. Through, I may upload something and disappear again.)

Also,

Optional Story Questions:

All right, Marth's parents are in the scene. How do you think they are going to react?

Your best friend confessed being a murderer in the past. How would you react?

(Definitely optional) What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter? (Sorry for this question popping up all the time, but I always wonder what my readers predict about the story.)

Chapter 39: Chapter 39

"Roy, tell me what happened." Eliwood ordered sternly. The two redheads were sitting in Eliwood's office.

Roy sighed in defeat and looked down at the floor, not answering Eliwood's answer. Upon entering the house, the older redhead immediately questioned the remaining four teens what caused Marth to run out of the house. Of course, due to Roy being his son, Eliwood interrogated him, out of all the witnesses.

"Roy, what did you do to Marth?" Eliwood asked, his gaze sharpening.

"He was not Marth..." Roy only said.

"What do you mean?"

"That guy who ran out of the house... That was not Marth." Roy spoke again.

"Roy, stop playing around." Eliwood said coldly. "Just tell me what happened."

"That guy wasn't Marth..."

"ROY! TELL ME!" Eliwood suddenly yelled, his eyes widening in fury.

Roy flinched. "Fine, fine... What if I told you, Marth kinda remembered something?"

"Something from his past?" Eliwood was a tad stunned; this was new.

"Yeah." Roy brushed his hair from his face, out of his closed navy blue eyes. "He told us he had a crappy past. Parents were strict with him, had a shitty sister, and miserable life at school."

"So...? Did you guys say something that made Marth ran away?" Eliwood asked.

"Well, we kinda chased him away on purpose." Roy carelessly said, looking away.

"For what purpose? Why would you do something like that?!"

"I don't think you want the Masked Slasher himself living in your own house with your family."

"The Masked Slasher?! What does that have to do Marth?!" Eliwood was slowly losing his patience. The conversation was becoming ridiculous.

"Well, Marth got sick of the crap people were putting him through so he went crazy and killed a few people. Eventually, the asylum took him and locked him up for a couple years before he escaped. I think Marth got hit by a car or something while fleeing, so I guess that's what made him loose his memories."

"You got to be kidding!" Eliwood exclaimed. His shocked voice boomed throughout the house, the words echoing down the hallway. It was nearly like a message to Lyn, who was downstairs drinking coffee. She just sighed and took a tiny sip; it must be another father and son argument...

"There must be a mistake! Marth must've been thinking about serial killers and thought it was his identity! You know how he is?!"

"Believe me, Father." Eliwood slightly jumped at Roy's abrupt, formal statement; he hardly referred to him as "Father". "Marth claimed to have known Cia, the sister of the famous actress Lana and one of his victims. Don't believe me still? You know the fact that Link and his brother is adopted? They have lots of things to tell you."

With that, Roy left the room, leaving his father alone in his office. Eliwood sighed as he turned on his computer; though he originally planned to sleep early, he decided to use an hour or two to do some research.

Roy entered his room, where his remaining three friends were waiting for him. "I told him everything." he said as he got onto his bed.

"...And?" Link asked. He was still furious at Marth.

"He didn't believe me, but I'll bet he'll find out soon." Roy replied.

An abrupt flash of lightning that cracked with a boom outside caused the teens to jump. Pit whimpered softly and lightly

clutched his wings for comfort. "There's a storm outside... Should we look for Marth?"

"Nah, he'll be ok." Roy answered, taking his phone out.

"What the hell is wrong with you guys?" Ike suddenly asked, clutching his fists tightly as he tried to hold in his anger. "Look, I know that Marth did crazy shit in the past, but we shouldn't we look for him? It's raining like hell out there!"

"Marth's gonna be ok." Roy calmly retorted back, giving Ike a neutral look. "He killed several people, so rain isn't gonna hurt him."

"Roy's right." Link answered bluntly, sitting against the wall. The tone of his voice hinted that he now loathed the bluenet. "He's the same guy who ran around muderin' people. Water ain't gonna hurt 'em."

"Damn you guys..." Ike growled at the resentful attitudes of his friends. "Marth is still a human! We need to help—"

"Ike, shut up!" Roy interrupted furiously, glaring at the indigo-haired male. "Marth isn't a human!"

"He is!" Ike argued loudly, his face turning red in anger.

"If you're too stupid to believe me, then I'll ask you this: what kind of a human gets pissed at the world and fucking kills people? There are better solutions than killing your problems. Still don't agree with me? I guess you're like Marth: a deranged maniac."

That was Roy's bitter, last sentence before he looked away from Ike, directing his attention towards his phone. Trying to control his rage, Ike turned to Link and Pit. While Pit was looking at the ground gloomily, Link gazed away from him.

"Elice, who is this?" Liza questioned, giving her son a strange look. "He seems familiar..."

Before answering, Elice looked at Marth who nodded, giving her the approval to reveal the truth. "Mother, Father, this is Marth."

Astonished, Liza and Cornelius looked at each other. How could it be possible? Their little son was gone since that fateful day...

"Don't be ridiculous." Cornelius scoffed, trying not to look at Marth. "Marth is gone. This young man just happened to look at him."

"Father! It's Marth!" Elice protested. "It is Marth! Don't you remember? When he was born, you always bragged about how he resembled you! He has your hair! Your eyes! Does this young man in front of you not look like you?"

Cornelius took a quick glance at Marth before turning to Elice. "He doesn't."

"Father, look at me!" Marth spoke up. "You just glanced, not look!"

Wrong move. As soon as those words fled Marth's lips, Marth was immediately met with a blunt fist in the mouth, causing him to fly across the living room before impacting the wall. A wheezy gasp choked for hair as Marth felt pain blister in his cheek. His agony was topped with a fierce hand that snatched him by the collar of his damp jacket and pulled him up.

"Father! You're hurting him!" Elice exclaimed in horror.

"Cornelius, put him down." Liza ordered sternly.

Marth's eyes were large in terror and shock. He let out a strangled yelp as Cornelius heartlessly threw him onto the hard, flat ground. Trembling in pain, he sat up and continued to watch the horrific scene play.

"This man is not my son!" Cornelius yelled at his wife and daughter, while his son could only helplessly look, his face winding in pure aghast at his father's hurtful words that stung him in the heart like a poisoned arrow. "My son wanted to be an actor. He was one of the top students in his class. Sadly, his grand future was snatched away by the bloodstained hands of the Masked Slasher! He was murdered in his own house in front of his family!"

"F-Father..." Marth weakly whimpered.

"You stay silent!" Cornelius shouted, giving his son his infamous glare. "Liza, call the police! We need to get him out of here!"

Liza nodded, hurrying into another room.

"Father! Marth didn't do anything wrong!" Elice shrieked, trying to get her point across.

"Do you not understand me?" Cornelius began, not noticing Marth unevenly rising to his feet. "Marth is dead! If this young man is an actor under the surname 'Lowell', then he's my son, not a deranged, vile monster who is no one's son!"

"E-Elice?" Marth's shaky, fragile voice cried out, grabbing her attention. She looked at Marth, who was standing in front of the doorway. The door was still open, allowing the forceful wind to mess his hair. A jolt of lightening flashed in Marth's empty, narrowed eyes, followed by dramatic thunder that shook the room.

"I... I'm not your brother." Marth finished before rushing out of the house, dismayed.

"Marth, wait! Stop!" Elice hurried to the doorway, her eyes darting around the soaked, dark front yard for the bluenet. Sadly, he completely vanished, like if he was just an illusion.

A small slip on the icy sidewalk was what halted Marth in his mad dash. With an "Oof!" he fell directly on his stomach and a certain headpiece slid off his glossy, wet hair. Marth trembled in both pain and anxiousness as his shaky hands took the tiara.

"...Damn it..." Marth said to himself as he gazed at the tiara and the rain pattered onto his shivering body.

Slowly getting up, Marth set Elice's tiara onto his head, tucking it behind his ears to prevent it from falling off his head. "Back to square one..." he mumbled to himself as began to trudge down the sidewalk.

The sound of a vehicle's running engine reverberating and the pitch-black shadow casted by a pair of blinding headlights was what caused Marth to turn around and gasp in shock. He recognized the two passengers in the van: a ginger-haired Gerudo and a pale, silvery-haired demon.

"A-Ah!" Marth cried out in alarm as he turned and panicky ran down the street, trying to escape from the asylum workers.

"Damn it, he spotted us! Chase him!" Ghirahim screeched as Ganondorf began to drive the van down the street, after the fleeing teen.

Another flash of lightning and a booming thunder made the four teenagers in the Pherae residence jump. Among them was Ike, who was trying to mentally hold a cup fall of water for as long as he could. The looming boom was what caused him to finally knock over his cup, spilling his anxiety.

"Marth's not coming back. We need to look for him." Ike stated as he stood up from his spot and began to leave the room.

"Well, you go." Roy said, browsing through his phone. "I'm not looking for him."

"Damn it, can you guys be sympathetic for once?!" Ike yelled, finally losing his temper. "I still think Marth is Marth! Marth has gone through a shitload of pain and when he finally manages to dump it by I don't know, losing his memory and meeting you guys, you guys dump more crap for him!"

"I can't forgive Marth." Link spoke up. "Ya don't know how it feels to have ya parents killed."

"...Fine, I'll look for him. Just me." Ike said before leaving the room.

As Ike was heard walking down the stairs, Pit suddenly leapt up to his feet and hurried after the larger male. "W-Wait for me!" he piped, zipping up his jacket. "I'm want to look for Marth too!"

Looking around the somewhat empty room, Link stood up and adjusted his cap before calmly walking out of the room. Just as he stepped out of the doorway, like if he had a pair of eyes on the back of his head, Link saw Roy give him a strange look. To clarify, Link looked behind his back, his floppy hat turning gracefully in motion. He was right; Roy's left brow was lowered along with his narrowed eyes, giving him a disgruntled, confused look.

"Hey, I can't live in the past forever." The Hylian said to Roy.

Roy thought for a few moments. Should he forgive Marth? Murder was unacceptable. It was robbing a life, something that could never be replaced. In the midst of the bloodthirsty rage, instead of handling his problem in a more peaceful way, Marth took it out on several faultless people, stealing their lives for his own selfish needs.

But, Marth was a human. A human could only take so much before cracking under pressure. If he was raised in a

warmer environment, he would have never committed the murders! Besides, it was clear that he regretted his actions. He tried to hide his past so he could live a new life and forget his true past. He had his ideal life! Had!

That meant Marth was not the Masked Slasher, not anymore that is. He decided to drop the dark alias and live a new one.

"Roy? I'm not sure when we'll be back, so..." Link walked into the hallway.

"Wait!" Link turned around and saw Roy hurry towards him. He shakily forced his phone into his jean pockets and grabbed his jacket, which was hung over a chair.

"I'm coming." Roy said as he put on his jacket, earning a smile from Link.

His stomach twisting, Marth halted at a corner of a street as he grabbed ahold a pole for support. Panting loudly, his head whipped around as he urgently glanced around for signs of the two workers. To his luck, he failed to see them, or anyone.

Trembling from the cold, Marth cautiously glanced around his unfamiliar surroundings. He was in a desolate, abandoned street. The buildings—identical rectangular or cubic blocks made of wearing, gray concrete— had shattered pitch-black windows; sloppy sprays of graffiti on its weathering walls; and doors boarded shut with worn wooden boards. The only thing that appeared to be alive was the feeble, flickering streetlights that struggled to stay awake.

There was no sign of any human beings. The curbs were exposed; there were no cars parked alongside them. All of the buildings—strong indicators of present families—were inhabitable with their boarded rooms, sullen windows, and threatening atmosphere. It was a horror scene. It was where the predator waited for an unsuspecting prey to pass.

Through, the current scene was an expectation. The presumed predator was not hunting, rather he was fleeing from beings far greater than him.

His body wildly trembling for warmth, Marth shakily wrapped his quivering arms around himself and he continued his way down the street. His journey marked one of the loneliest experiences in his life.

Where should he go now? Marth not dared to return to the Lowell residence. Because he was caught trespassing into the sacred area, guards were now surrounding the area. Despite Elice's kind presence, he was probably never allowed there. His father would likely kick him out or call the police if he attempted to return. Being his father's puppet, his mother would also deny entry for him.

"... monster who is no one's son." Biting his lips, Marth painfully cringed at his father's words. Cornelius Lowell, the biological father of Marth Lowell, actually spoke those words while his own son was present. If Marth was not actually Cornelius's son, then where did he come from? Was Cornelius just in denial, or did the Lowell family happened to find him in a cabbage patch, abandoned by his true family?

The echoing sound of thunder caused Marth to look up, his eyes meeting the jagged, flashing claws of thunder. Something as hard as a tiny pebble clucked on his head. Covering his head, Marth looked up and watched the pathetic, harmless droplets of rain turn into hail. He increased his pace down the streets, shielding himself from the hail with his raw, cold hands.

He needed to find shelter. Marth looked around his surroundings for anything that could cover him from the tumbling hail. As he hurried down the drenched streets, he happened to look over his shoulder and barely spot a pair of headlights in the distance.

"No, they're coming! I must hide!" Panicked, Marth rushed into the alleyway closest to him. There, he anxiously glanced around for anything he could hide behind—a trash can, garbage dump, anything that was larger than a teenage boy!

A window with a shattered glass was what caught his eyes. It happened to be large enough for him to crawl through! With his bare fists, Marth shattered the remaining pieces of glass, before climbing into the building.

Unbeknownst to the bluenet, a van sneakily parked in another alley adjacent to the building saw the young man enter the building.

"There goes our target." Validar chuckled to Gharnef, who was seated next to him. "Shall we drag him out of the building and return him to his rightful home now?"

"No." Gharnef suddenly got out of the van, taking his dark umbrella with him to shield him from the hail. "Call in the rest of

the men and have that building surrounded. Meanwhile, I shall have a chat with the Masked Slasher..."

The interior of the building was murky to say the least. As he scrambled through the darkness, Marth bumped into a few crates and stumbled over a worn, old car tire. He could barely see what was in front of his face. The atmosphere was a refrigerator of the size of a home. Someone could store tons of fresh meat in the room and it would still be preserved after a week! Through clouds of dust made his nose tingle, Marth did not care. The only thing that mattered was shelter form the merciless weather.

Through he disliked the sound of thunder, Marth desired a flash of lightning. It was the only source of light that could light up the room, unless if he managed to find a light switch in the room. He was awfully tired of clumsily bumping into random objects in the dark.

Now that he was here, what should he do? Sleep was the first thing that came to mind. He was exhausted from traveling in violent rainy weather. But, where should he sleep? Just sleeping on the ground was painful on the boney body.

He could make a small bed for himself, though he needed to look for the required materials in the warehouse. However, it was quite difficult to look around in the dark, maybe he should try to find a light switch first...

Marth backed up, looking directly at the ceiling for a lightbulb with a pull string. In the progress, he accidentally backed into something flat and smooth, knocking it down.

The sound of shattered fragments littering the ground was what Marth heard next. What did he knock over? Was it an expensive vase of some sort? An unused picture frame? At that moment, flash of lightning briefly lit the interior of the room. Marth glanced up the ceiling and noticed the hunted lightbulb with a long pull string. Standing on his toes, he gently pulled the string. Although it was weak, the lightbulb managed to illuminate Marth's surrounding, which made him gasp in horror. His cerulean eyes dilated as his face paled at the sight of the planar objects.

Sitting in the middle of the rooms were mirrors. Through most of them were different—rectangular, circular, dresser mirrors, small, large, thing, fat—they produced an equal amount of dread to Marth with a single image: his reflection.

"You can't escape from who you are."

Thunder rumbled through the sky and was followed by another flash of lightning as Marth backed away from the mirrors, clutching his fists.

"You can't escape from who you are."

Marth let out a startled cry as his back hit the wall. His eyes looked directly at the reflections pictured in the mirrors. They solemnly gazed back at him.

"You can't escape from who you are."

Beginning to feel weak, Marth sank to ground, slumping limply against the wall as he shakily covered his eyes with his hands.

"You can't escape from who you are."

"LEAVE ME ALONE!" Marth's terrified voice echoed through the abandoned building. It was followed by the bluenet's weeps.

Marth bit his lips, trying to hold back his sobs. Please! The blue-haired man in the mirror could not be him! Please... Like Marth himself, the lightbulb fizzed and flickered before completely shutting off, leaving the teen in the dark. With a shaky gasp, Marth lied on the ground and curled into a defensive fetal position, refusing to look back at the person he dreaded the most: himself. This person was responsible for his fixed, fated plight since birth. No matter how hard he tried, Marth could not disassociate from him.

Swallowing, Marth opened the palms of his hands and stared at it, remembering the atrocious deed he did to his own family.

Author's Notes: I do not know how I managed to survive tests...

OT: Sorry for the late update, I spent some time studying for the SAT and AP tests. The good news is, I managed to knock the SAT and 2 AP tests recently, so that means moooore updates. (Unless I still get lots of work from my

classes or get stalled by writer's block. Also, don't be too happy. I have 2 other tests to go) If all goes according to my plan, I should be able to edit some of the chapters, which I hadn't gotten enough time to do so!

Optional Story Questions:

Why do you think Cornelius kept saying that his son is dead?

Who do you think is/are the worst character(s) in the story?